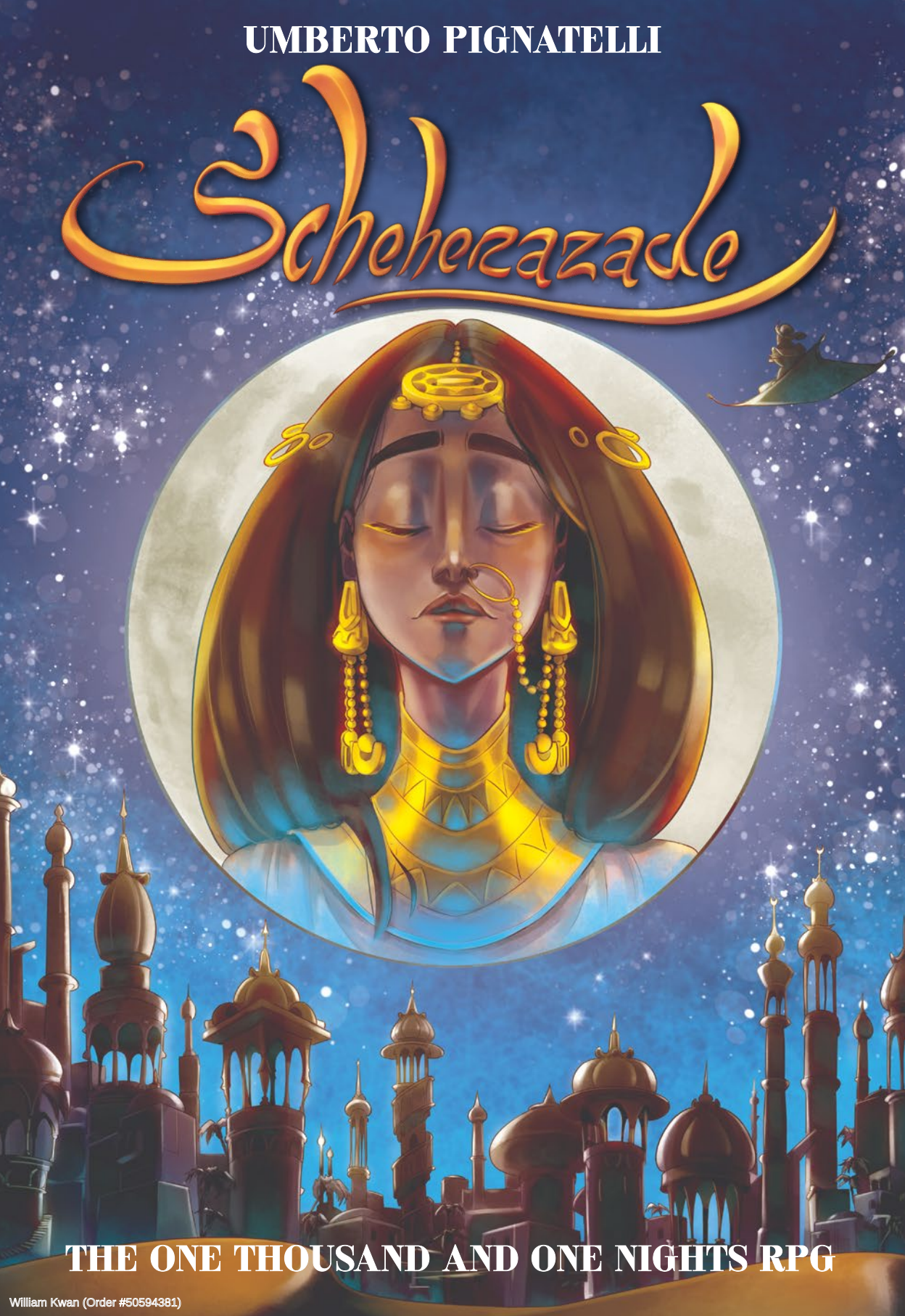
UMBERTO PIGNATELLI

Scheherazade



THE ONE THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS RPG

William Kwan (Order #50594381)

Scheherazade

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William Kwan (Order #3059454)

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On the cover

The Dream of Scheherazade

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Introduction

"Here Scheherazade perceived the light of morning, and discontinued the recitation. How excellent is thy story! And how pretty! But what is this in comparison with that which I will relate to thee in the next night, if I live, and the Caliph spare me!

And the Caliph said, I will not kill her until I hear the remainder of her story."

The One Thousand and One Nights

Far away, in space and time, in the city of Bagdad, it's sunrise.

Under the fading light of the moon the city is still sleeping, apart from a single light on the top of the tallest tower of the palace of the Caliph.

There, in the light of a lamp, a girl with black eyes is telling a story to the Caliph Shahryar, ruler of all the kingdom. Her name is Scheherazade.

"… and so, my Caliph the story continues… as I'll tell you tomorrow night."

The girl and the man both smile. For one thousand nights Scheherazade has told a story to the Caliph, who let her live another night to hear the end of the Tale.

But both of them know the threat of death ended many months ago: Shahryar tenderly loves Scheherazade, as she does him, and tomorrow, when she will tell him her last story, the Caliph will make her his queen.

But sometimes stories don't go as they are supposed to.

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The next day, at second prayer's time, when the servants go to wake up Scheherazade, they find her in deep slumber. They try to wake her, but to no effect. Frightened, they call the Vizier Jafar, the right hand of the Caliph, but not even he, a man of great knowledge, can manage to wake up Scheherazade. The voices carry to the Caliph's rooms, and the mighty ruler of all Persia comes in person to wake up his future queen.

But with no effect.

The best doctors and hakim, which are wise men, are called, but nobody manages to wake her up.

"Blessed son of God" they say, prostrating themselves, "an incantation of some sort has been placed on her. One we cannot unravel. We fear she will sleep forever".

"It cannot be!" the Caliph cried "I am the most powerful man in all of Persia! I swear that the man or woman who will free Scheherazade from the curse will be rewarded beyond all imagination!"

Mad with grief, the Caliph refused to see anyone, and ordered that Scheherazade be brought to the top of the highest tower of the palace.

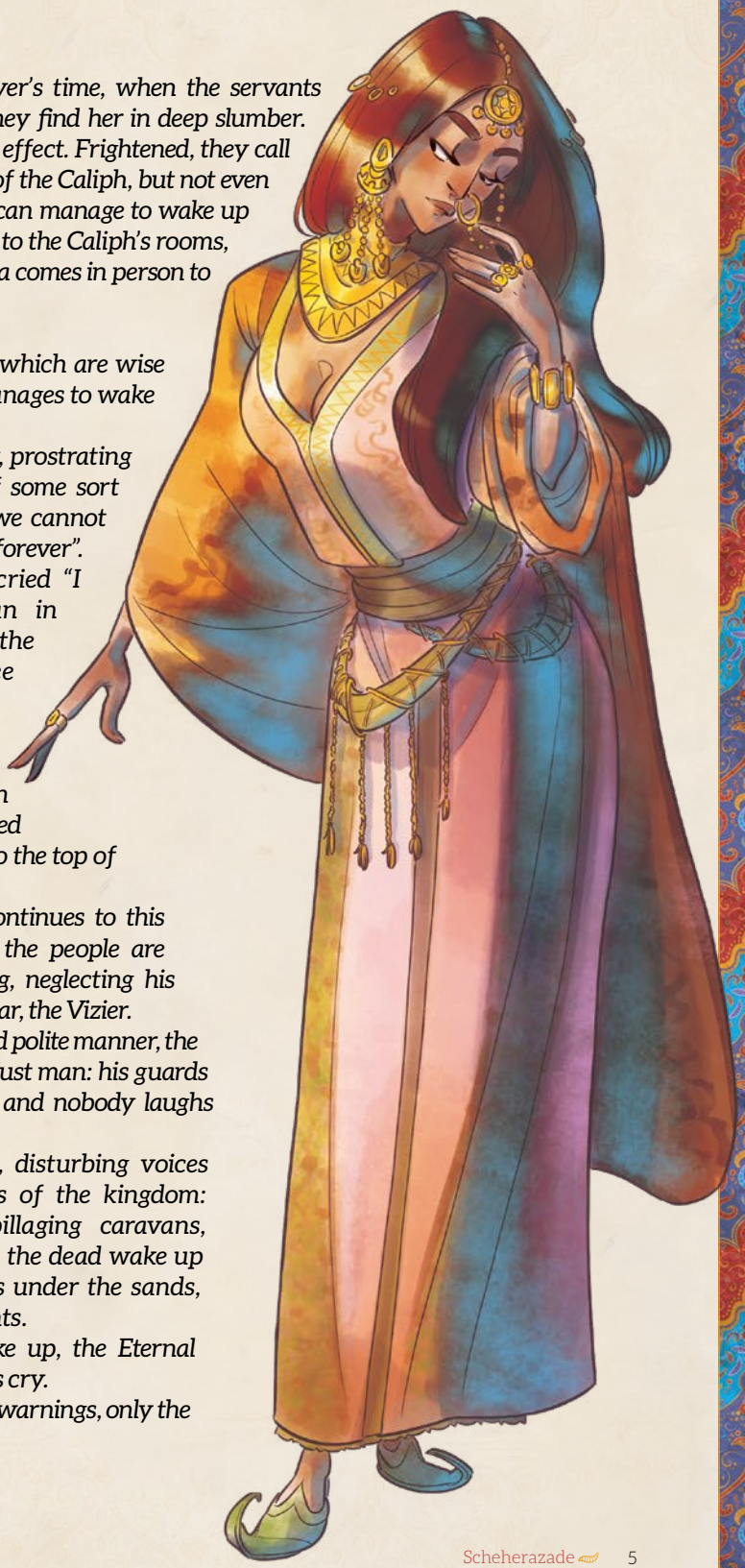
The sleep of Scheherazade continues to this day, many months later, and the people are worried. The Caliph is grieving, neglecting his duties, which fall entirely on Jafar, the Vizier.

And despite his wide smiles and polite manner, the right hand of the Caliph isn't a just man: his guards tax the rich and vex the poor, and nobody laughs anymore in Bagdad.

As if this were not enough, disturbing voices come from the far provinces of the kingdom: bandits roam the desert, pillaging caravans, strange beasts infest the skies, the dead wake up in the ruins of forgotten cities under the sands, and djinn howl in the cold nights.

"If Scheherazade doesn't wake up, the Eternal Caliphate will end!" the prophets cry.

But nobody pays heed to their warnings, only the moon, with her pale stare.



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The Dream

The night Scheherazade fell asleep you had a dream.

You were in the desert, alone in the starry night. And then, reflected in the full moon, you saw a girl. She stared at you with eyes full of fear. "Please, help me!" she said.

You knew her.

She was Scheherazade, the promised bride of the Caliph.

You knew her because you had met her in the past, and told her your story. A story that she retold to the Caliph during the one thousand nights.

You woke up covered in sweat, knowing that something terrible was happening, not only to Scheherazade, but to the whole caliphate.

Something only you, and those like you, can stop.

In the sky, the moon shimmers, like a pale gem.

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Heroes of *Scheherazade*

This game is a very special one. It is a role-playing game, set in a world similar to ancient Arabia and Persia. It is the world of the One Thousand and One Nights, a place of marvels, where djinn can fulfill the wishes of mortals, where poor orphans can become rich, and where carpets can fly, I assure you, because I have seen them with these very eyes!

You'll take the role of a fictional hero, one of the many folks Scheherazade met, and whose stories she tells.

You are tasked with a very difficult quest: discover what happened to Scheherazade and, possibly, wake her up. There are others like you: people who met the young princess before or after you, and who had the same dream you had.

Together, you'll be the heroes of *Scheherazade*, and will hopefully save her, and the whole kingdom.

But this is only a loose framework: The Caliphate of the Eternal Moon is a place of wonder, and you can experience a number of adventures in it, even those not connected to the royal princess.

About Singular They

The growing consensus is that "they" can and should be used as a gender-neutral, singular English-language pronoun when one is needed. We have adopted that as the style in Scheherazade. If you see this grammatical construction, it is intentional.

How to Play *Scheherazade*

The Unique System

This game uses a particular gaming ruleset called the **Unique System.** The name is due to the fact that each character is really unique and different from the others, thanks to their Gift. It is a very easy system, don't worry.

Gaming Material

To play *Scheherazade*, you need a copy of this book, several copies of the Character Sheet (which you can download at www.spaceorange42.com), and a dozen six-sided dice, one of which must be different from the others in size or color.

The Magical Lamp

Many tried to find it, but only I, Alladin, Prince of Thieves of all Bagdad, held it in hands. Do you want to hear the whole story? Well, It's a long one, my friend, but the night is young, so, please pour some other tea...

–Alladin, Prince of Thieves

William Kwan (Order #30634634)

You also need some pencils, erasers, and paper on which to sketch and write notes. The game is played in "theater of the mind" style, so miniature figures aren't necessary, but they could be useful to represent the spatial position of the characters in some situations.

You could also find having a dozen or so tokens (coins, glass beads, or something similar) to track things in the game useful.

Last but not least: find a reasonably quiet place to play, and bring plenty of snacks and beverages!

Naming Conventions

Scheherazade uses some general RPG terms.

Storyteller. He or she runs the game world, unraveling the story for the other players and describing the consequence of their actions.

PC. Player character, aka the "hero". The fictional alter-ego portrayed in the game by a player.

NPC. Non-player character. Every monster, creature, and character controlled by the Storyteller.

Dice Conventions

Scheherazade only uses six-sided dice (d6). Usually you need to simply roll and count successes (see the Game Rules chapter below).

D66. In certain situations, you'll need to roll a d66, which means rolling two d6 in sequence, taking the first number as the tens and the second as the digits. So, if you roll, "1" followed by "6", the result is 16, while if you roll "6" followed by "1", the result is 61.

A Disclaimer from the Author

This game is about the Arabian world, its legends, and fascinations. Despite the fact that the names and the places sound familiar, it is fictional. The customs, persons, and situations represented in the game relate to the real Arab world as the vanilla fantasy settings of many RPGs relate to the real European Middle Ages.

We have maximum respect for Arabian culture.

In other words, this is only a game, take it as a game.

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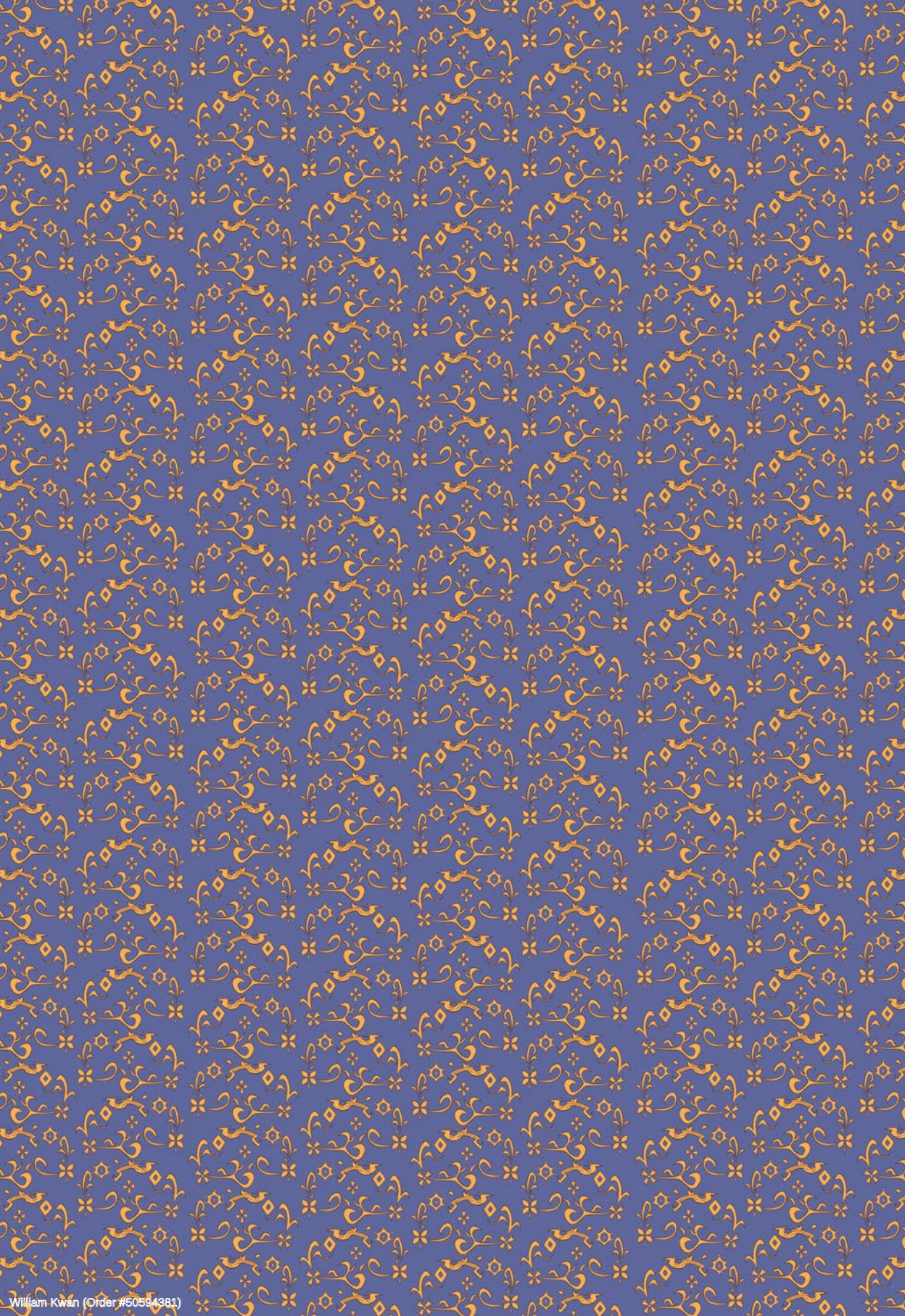
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Player Guide

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The World of Scheherazade

"My story is of such marvel that if it were written with a needle on the corner of an eye, it would yet serve as a lesson to those who seek wisdom."

-Anonymous

The Caliphate of the Eternal Moon is set in a world similar to, but different from, ours. It is the world of myth, of legends and of stories, the world of the Middle-East as it exists in dreams and tales. Some names, places, and customs may seem familiar, but you'll soon discover that what I tell you, gentle reader, is a mix of fable and truth, marvel and horror, love and death.

There is no-one better than Ali, the blind beggar of the Great Bazaar of Bagdad, to describe to you the world where he lives. But remember: don't believe everything he says.

Stories: In this chapter, you'll find several stories. They are fictional tales of the Arabian Nights, left for you, the Storyteller, to expand into exciting adventures or to be used by the players as foundations for their Stories.

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A View from the Tallest Tower of Bagdad

Gentle stranger, you who still have the blessing of sight, hear my words. Have you ever heard the tale of The Falcon of the Caliph?

One day, a sunny one, the Caliph ordered his best hunting falcon to fly high into the sky, higher than the tallest tower of Bagdad, to observe as far as he could, and report back to him.

The mighty bird flew, and this is what he saw.

West of Bagdad, he saw the vast sea of silt leading to Syria, land of ancient power and great riches. And even his raptor's eyes could not see farther than Damascus, city of blades, although the kingdom of the Caliph doesn't end there, continuing further west, to the mysterious pyramids of the Nile.

East of Bagdad, the eyes of the bird, should they have been able to raise up in the sky as the legendary Roc and pass over the mountains, avoiding the Damavand volcano, where the three-headed dragon Azi Dahaka lays, would have seen many far lands, but even in this way he wouldn't be able to see the ancient lands of the elephants, where the voice of the Prophet echoes.

The falcon began to become tired, but he was a loyal servant, and turned southward, following the Tigris River, fertile as the garden of the Caliph, and in the end, after the swamps, observed the vast Sea of Persia, from where ships come and depart to unknown lands, returning full of riches.

There remained only the north, where the mountains of Armenia stand, a land of powerful warriors and ancient mysteries, gateway to the far-away lands of the north.

The bird flew back to his master's arm, who asked: "So, what have you seen?"

"For the glory of Almighty God" the noble creature answered, "The Caliphate of the Eternal Moon extends as far as can be seen in every direction I turned."

And it will last forever, if our beloved Scheherazade, wife of the Caliph, can be woken up.

Scheherazade

Scheherazade is the pivotal character of the One Thousand and One Nights. She is the eldest daughter of Jafar, the Vizier of the Caliph, but her existence was kept secret from her father for many years, during which she traveled, in disguise, across the caliphate. During this time she got to know a number of people from all walks of life, who became the material of her stories.

Then she returned to Bagdad, revealed herself, and offered to marry the Caliph, despite the strong opposition of her father, who knew, as everybody in Bagdad did, that the Caliph killed every woman he married at the end of the wedding night.

But Scheherazade knew the manner of keeping the Caliph interested in her, by telling him a new story every night, and only ending it the night after.

With this simple trick, she survived for nine hundred ninety-nine nights, and, in the meantime, love blossomed between the girl and the caliph.

That is, until the one thousandth night...

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The Caliphate of the Eternal Moon

I am no scholar, gentle reader, only a humble beggar, but I can tell you what my mother and her mother before her told me.

There was a time, before the caliphate, when these lands were savage, and the men and women who lived here were followers of false gods.

Then the Prophet came, showing us the true god, the Almighty and Merciful. Under the guidance of his teachings, the caliphate was created, and ruled by the king of all kings, the Caliph, who is lord of all the lands and the people to the horizon and far beyond.

The legend says that, on the day the caliphate was created, the moon was high in the sky, and remained there, day and night, until the celebration ended. Then a voice was heard, saying that the caliphate would last as long as the moon would shine upon it, which is only another way to say "forever", isn't it?

William Kwan (Order #30634634)

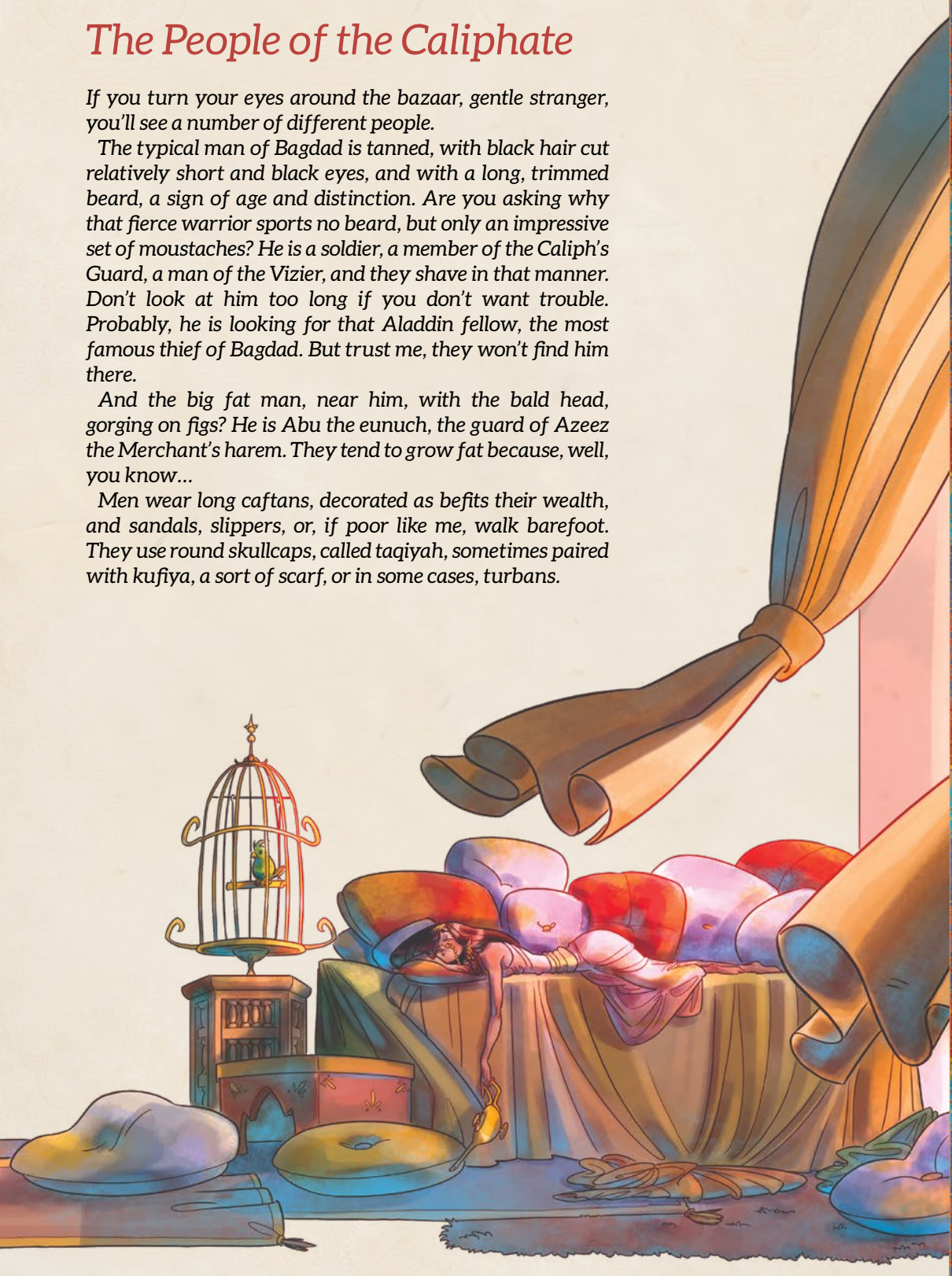
The People of the Caliphate

If you turn your eyes around the bazaar, gentle stranger, you'll see a number of different people.

The typical man of Bagdad is tanned, with black hair cut relatively short and black eyes, and with a long, trimmed beard, a sign of age and distinction. Are you asking why that fierce warrior sports no beard, but only an impressive set of moustaches? He is a soldier, a member of the Caliph's Guard, a man of the Vizier, and they shave in that manner. Don't look at him too long if you don't want trouble. Probably, he is looking for that Aladdin fellow, the most famous thief of Bagdad. But trust me, they won't find him there.

And the big fat man, near him, with the bald head, gorging on figs? He is Abu the eunuch, the guard of Azeez the Merchant's harem. They tend to grow fat because, well, you know…

Men wear long caftans, decorated as befits their wealth, and sandals, slippers, or, if poor like me, walk barefoot. They use round skullcaps, called taqiyah, sometimes paired with kufiya, a sort of scarf, or in some cases, turbans.



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The Greatest Thief of Bagdad

Everybody has heard at least once the story of Aladdin, the greatest thief of Bagdad. How, in a faraway city, he found a genie who granted him three wishes, and how he married a princess and became rich and famous.
So then why today is Aladdin the most feared scourge of the fat purses of the merchants of the Great Bazaar? There are a number of wild stories about that: first, that he lost his lamp and control of the genie, second, that the princess he loved so much died or disappeared, third that all the stories of the genie and the marriage were a fakes, which he purposely spread to increase his fame. Whatever the reason, while the guards and the merchants of Bagdad hate him with all their hearts, the poor ones of our blessed city love him, because he is always very generous with the fruit of his robberies, and more than one widow and her orphans have been fed by him.
But what he gives freely is only a fraction of the riches he has amassed in recent years: somewhere, in a mysterious hideout no-one has ever found, Aladdin keeps the treasures he has plundered and prepares for new, more incredible enterprises.

But let me speak of the women. Oh, the women of the caliphate are the most beautiful in the world! Fair skinned, because they tend to protect themselves from the sun, they have black eyes, painted with henna, and black or brown hair. I have heard that the eyes of our lady Scheherazade, shined bright as gems, poor girl...

Women wear hijabs, a sort of scarf that covers their heads, which some of them pair with a veil. They complete their garment with long robes, or, in some cases, trousers. You are asking about that beautiful girl smiling at you from the balcony? She is Vella, an odalisque, a dancer. Have you never seen an odalisque dance? If not, you should. If you cannot, I'll tell you the Tale of the Bird Girl in the Golden Cage*, it's worth hearing, I assure you.*

But the caliphate isn't only Bagdad, of course. Among the crowded streets you can find people of many countries, like that tall, skinny Bedouin, dressed in red. He is bargaining with a blonde foreign merchant, who comes from the far away north.

And you see that holy man, meditating? Yes, he is sitting on a bed of nails, because he is a fakir. He probably comes from India, but some of them are also from Bagdad. A ruse, you say? Well, maybe some fakir are fakes, but others are truly holy men. Nothing to compare to the tall, bearded man, the one with two guards. He is a Magus, a sorcerer of the north, master of unknown secrets. Stay clear of him.

Oh no, don't tell me the blue dressed man came? He is a dervish, a holy warrior, and if he is there it means he is looking for the Magus. We must leave the market immediately, for blood will be shed, and old Ali doesn't want to be around when it is...

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Living in the Caliphate

Ah... my friend, thank you for carrying me, a poor old blind beggar, on your shoulders to the House of Marila. It is the best tea house in the bazaar. Her cardamom biscuits are a treasure over which men like me weep. Bring another tray, sweetie, and maybe some sherbet. And, by chance, do you already have some lamb cooking for dinner?

You are asking what do we eat in the caliphate?

Well, I don't eat much, but I can get a cup of rice each day, as the poor ones do, if alms are good. You do know that the Prophet said that giving alms is a holy duty, don't you?

Dates are sweet and common everywhere, but we don't eat them too much. Only in time of famine do people go from Bagdad to Basra, where they grow free, to live off them. The tables of the people are never missing bread, in various forms, and meat of lamb, mutton, goat, chicken, or duck. No pig, of course. We are also fond of fish, and the Tigris River is quite rich with these. To complement them, there are a number of vegetables garnished with onion, garlic, spices, almonds, lemon, mint, and rose water.

On this topic, have you ever heard the Tale of the Garden of the Blind Sheikh*? The fruit growing there is the most delicious and magical of the caliphate, if you can find it...*

Oh, but now the sherbet is coming. Never tasted it? It's a delicacy, watered fruit juice and sugar. The closest thing on earth to the paradise of the Almighty, apart from a night in the palace of the Lord of the Ashashin, they say.

Oh, the commotion at the bazaar has ended: the guards are carrying away the body of one of the guards of the Magus, but he and the dervish have escaped.

You ask how I can know it, being blind? I have very good ears, of course.

Now, help me up, there is place I want to show you.

Visiting Bagdad

Oh, good, give me your arm, and follow my directions, it isn't far away. How can I know where I'm going, you ask, being blind?

I have lived in Bagdad all my life, I know every stone of this place.

We are in the **Great Bazaar***, it is the best place to find wares: silk from the far East, spices from the desert itself, sweet dates from the oasis, fruit of any type and color,*

Dervishes

A number of religious sects abound in the caliphate, but the Dervishes are among the most famous ones. These dedicated holy warriors, blessed by the Almighty, renounce all material things to dedicate themselves to the perfection of body and soul. They are organized in Sects, sort of monasteries, where they are trained in all forms of combat, the most famous one being the Dervish Dance, a technique based on wild moves which disorients the enemy, usually practiced unarmored and armed with swords or spears. The Dervishes, despite being officially subjects of the Caliph, are in truth quite independent, giving their loyalty to the Sheikhs at the head of their respective sects.

Dervishes accept both men and women into their ranks (even if men are far more numerous), and are often seen wandering in the caliphate, fighting evil where they find it.

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Jafar the Vizier

Everybody knows the name of Jafar, the Vizier of the Caliph, his right hand, and, at the moment, the real ruler of the caliphate.

But who really is this man? He arrived many years ago, riding a black horse, and he entered into the graces of Shahryar thanks to his wisdom and his wits. In the years since, he has assumed always more powers, but proved himself to be a wise and just man. Jafar often disguises himself as a beggar, and wanders in the city, to better understand the needs of the common people, carrying their pleas to the Caliph.

Even during the worst years of the Caliph, when our mighty ruler sent to death all the concubines he had, Jafar was the voice of reason.

He introduced Scheherazade to Shahryar, and there are unconfirmed stories suggesting that she could be his daughter.

But in recent months, starting from when Shahryar's mourning began, Jafar has changed: he isn't a just man anymore, but a cruel tyrant, and his guards ransack, plunder, and commit all terrible acts in name of the Caliph. He still has the habit of mingling with the common people, but now only to spy and root out his opponents. And he is much better at disguise now, his skill is almost magical, and it is said that nobody can discover him if he doesn't want them to.

The few ones who have met him in person say he even looks younger than before. How strange...

A Traveler Guide of the Caliphate

Coinage. We use the dinar, a golden coin, but the greater part of commerce is conducted in silver, with the dirham coin, and through barter. In the market, we accept coins of every type, as long as they aren't counterfeit.

Day's Division. We divide the day into five parts: Fajr (dawn), Dhur (noon), Asr (afternoon), Maghrib (evening), and Isha (night), separated by the five mandatory prayers that all of the faithful are expected to make (see Pillars of Faith, below).

Food. Bread, made with wheat, is the main food, with rice for the poorest ones. Mutton, goat and duck are the favorite meats. We don't eat pork for religious reasons, and don't drink wine (but date wine is technically accepted).

Economy. Herding and farming are the main ways of earning a living, and a good artisan can live comfortably too, but if you want to get very rich, you must become a merchant, traveling to remote lands on ships or with caravans.

Language. Arabic is spoken everywhere, but the caliphate is a melting pot of cultures: you could hear people speaking in Farsi (Persian), Greek, Egyptian, and a dozen other languages, including Magian, the tongue of the ancient sorcerers, the Magi, followers of Zoroaster.

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Medicine. We are far advanced in this field. The hakim (sages) of the caliphate are the most knowledgeable in the world. We have invented several surgical instruments, for example, the hijama, the suction cup, used to create vacuum around a wound.

Ground Travel. Horses and camels are the best solution to travel across the large, deserted areas of the caliphate. Roads, in particular in remote areas, are rare and often in bad shape. If you want to cross the desert, you would do well to find a caravan or a guide.

Pillars of Faith. A good Muslim follows the five precepts of the faith of Islam. They are: the profession of faith (no other god exists besides Allah), the prayer (which must be made five times a day, see above, facing in direction of Mecca, where the holy stone, the Kaaba, lays), giving alms (for the poor ones and the support of mosques), fasting during Ramadan (a month during which eating and smoking is forbidden from dawn to dusk), and pilgrimage to Mecca (to be made at least once in a lifetime, during the twelfth month of the year).

Religion. Of course, in The Caliphate of the Eternal Moon, we worship Allah, the Almighty, but this land has a history, and a long one, and ancient cults still exist and in some cases, despite being forbidden, are still practiced: Zoroastrianism, Mithraism, and even older religions coming from as far away as India and Egypt.

Sea Travel. The Tigris River is navigable, of course, and our empire has a port on the Sea of Persia, through which you can travel to far-away lands. Merchants can become fabulously wealthy in this way, but sea travel is dangerous: there are storms, pirates, and always the chance to lose your way and end up in some unknown land full of monsters, as happened to Sinbad the Sailor...

Social Organization. The ruler of all the empire is, obviously, the Caliph, Shahryar, heir of the Prophet, the "king of kings". Under him there are a number of other lesser rulers, call them "kings", if you want. Especially in the desert, people are divided into tribes, which follow the command of the eldest and the wisest among them, who they call "sheikh".

War. Our people conquered the world. The best soldiers of the caliphate are the ghilman, warrior-slaves of the caliph. In this era, warriors wield swords and scimitars, the best ones coming from Damascus, as well as spears and bows. Our army relies mainly on infantry, but the swift, mounted troops, especially those of the desert nomads, are becoming more important.

Writing. Of course, in the caliphate, we know how to write, what do you think? Arabic is a wonderful language, written from right to left. We are also very good at mathematics, after all, we invented the zero. The House of Wisdom in Bagdad rivals the lost Library of Alexandria, although the majority of the population doesn't know how to read, and knowledge is often passed on through stories and prayers.

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strange beasts, and, of course, adventures and gossip. If you take the time to talk with those merchants, caravan drivers, and porters, they could tell you incredible stories. They may also steal that purse of yours, if you continue to keep it in plain sight. We aren't too far away from the **Quarter of Thieves**, *remember...*

Do you know that old Bagdad was perfectly round shaped? It was built in very few years by a caliph of the past, Al-Mansur, and had **Four Gates** *exactly equidistant, each leading to four different parts of the empire.*

There is a story about them, The Four Sons of the Caliph, *and that Al-Mansur tasked his heirs to build them. But the four brothers were lazy, and in place of making them themselves, they tricked four djinn to build them in one night, trapping the powerful spirits in the stones of the gates. The legend says that, on the day that all four gates will be destroyed, and the djinn set free, the caliphate will fall.*

Well, in the middle of the city there are the **Great Mosque** *and the* **Golden Palace** *Do you hear that chanting? It is the muezzin, the call to prayer, coming from the mosque. We would attend if we weren't so busy now. The palace instead is the residence of the Caliph, his future queen, Scheherazade, and the Vizier. I don't think people like you and I will ever visit it, but I have heard even stranger stories...*

Hey, you have eyes, use them! We almost tripped in a pothole in the ground. You must be careful, they lead into the **Sewers of Bagdad**. *It's an unsavory place and... have you ever heard the story of* The Young Beggar and the Lost Slipper? *There are things living there, dreaded ghuls from before the coming of the Prophet. I am not making it up, there is the* Story of the Book of the Lost Boy *about it, and no, I won't retell it, it is too spooky.*

Oh, finally we arrive where we want to be: at the docks on the River Tigris. Let's see if my old friend Sinbad here has what I need.

Ah, I can smell it: a big vase of oil, enough to keep my house lamps lit for all the winter. Please, could you carry it? My shoulders aren't as strong as in the past.

No, no, don't be angry, obviously the docks aren't our final destination, only a little detour. To compensate you, I'll show another important place: do you see the vast necropolis on the opposite side of the river? It is the Cemetery of Al-Khaizuran, where a number of wise scholars and noblemen are buried. It was a placid place

Sinbad the Sailor

The stories of the Seven Voyages of Sinbad are widespread in the caliphate. The reason is that Sinbad himself, now an old man, tells them to whoever wants to hear. The funny fellow left the sea years ago, staying with his daughter in Bagdad now. But despite having said goodbye to the sea, he cannot avoid being near the water, so you'll find him often on the docks, talking with people and selling the wares he trades in to sustain himself (the legendary riches of his seem a little exaggerated). Sinbad's mind isn't so sharp these days, old age has started taking its toll on him, but nevertheless, he is still an inexhaustible source of tales, legends, and lies. In addition, very little of what happens on the docks of Bagdad escapes his eyes.

William Kwan (Order #30894654)

The Book of Duban

One of the many tales told by Scheherazade was about the mysterious healer and hakim Duban, who cured King Yunan of leprosy. But an envious Vizier poisoned the king's mind, and he had the sage beheaded. The hakim submitted to the king's will, but asked him to read his book of wisdom while keeping his cut-off head nearby. The king accepted, and he found the pages of the book blank, but very sticky. Without thinking, he licked his finger, discovering that they were covered in poison, and died. This is the commonest version of the tale, but there is another one in which the Book of Duban is a powerful tome of magic, and is hidden somewhere in the House of Wisdom in Bagdad, protected by the avenging spirit of its owner...

of contemplation, but I have heard that for some months now, strange shadows lurk there after sunset, as the Story of the Strangled Elephant *tells.*

Oh, by chance, do you mind paying for it? The alms this morning weren't so good...

The House of Wisdom

Oh, finally, here we are, in the very place I wanted to lead you! Do you see this imposing palace? Of course you do, you have good eyes, after all. It is the House of Wisdom, the place where all the knowledge of the caliphate is gathered. Leave the oil vase at the door, and give a good tip to the guardian: he knows me, I used to come here often to read... well, I mean to hear the hakim, the wise men, speaking.

The books contained here can rival those in the fabled Library of Alexandria. Quick, turn left, before that guard spot us. Open the door. Is it locked? Let me try it, maybe they closed it by error. Luckily, my old fingers still know their way around a lock.

Done!

Before we enter, I must warn you of two things: first, be quiet, very quiet, we don't want to disturb the other students. Second, if by chance you see a black dressed hakim, a headless one, warn me, and absolutely don't talk to him. He is the ghost of one Duban, yes, the very one from the Tale of the Vizier and the Sage Duban. *That cursed book is somewhere in this library, but we aren't looking for it. Instead, pick the book on the top shelf, the goat-skin one, and open it on the table.*

It's the diary of my friend, Hassan the Barber, who recently visited the lands surrounding Bagdad. He was a friend of Scheherazade too, and she asked him to write a report of what was happening in the countryside. He did, but when he returned, the Caliph's favorite was already sleeping, and poor Hassan was arrested by the Vizier's guards. I am pretty sure the reason for it is in this diary. Now, please open it, and read. Nobody will disturb us for some time.

William Kwan (Order #5059454)

The Barber's Diary

You cautiously open the cracking pages of the book, finding a series of brief annotations in small Arabic characters and some sketches. In the beginning, they look confusing, then, after a few pages, a world opens in front of you...

About Barbers

A clarification, for you, gentle reader of the far future.
In our times "barbers" aren't simply hairdressers: they are often healers, surgeons, and snake oil salesmen. For this reason, they often choose a life of wandering and adventure.

Bad Dreams in Babylon's Shadows

... and that night I and my guide stopped near some pistachio trees, in the shadows of a big ruined city nearby.

"Why don't we find shelter in the ruins, Yusuf?" I asked.

"We cannot, Master." The desert man whispered, crossing his hands to banish evil. "It's Babylon, thrice destroyed and cursed by God! Bad, evil things creep out from it at night!"

I laughed at his superstition, but I complied with his decision, after all, why pay a guide if you don't follow his advice?

Later that night, I was awoken by a muffled sound. Yusuf laid on the ground, dead, a humanoid, gray form, hovered over him, eyes white and empty, mouth dirty with the blood of my poor companion.

Without even thinking, I reached for the camel and I ran away, while other shadows crept out of the ruins, running and jumping after me. I whipped the poor beast mercilessly, and we left them behind. Only when I was far away did I dare to look back, and I saw Babylon behind me: in the pale light of the moon, a spectral tower stood in the middle of it, so tall as to reach and pass the clouds. A tower that wasn't there during daytime. Praying the name of God, I...

William Kwan (Order #5053545)

Babylon is an ancient city, Ali explained, after I stopped reading, the text becoming too confused.

It belongs to a time now past, and I had heard stories of that tower the Barber saw before, Ali continued. It's an ancient Hebrew legend, they called it the **Tower of Babel**, *and it is said that it was built by a foolish king who wanted to reach the sky, the kingdom of God. It was a bad move, of course, and god cursed the king and all his people, but, well, I am not sure of my friend's words this time: he has always been too fond of date wine, after all. Surely, he saw something, but Babel's Tower, really? Bah... What I really know is that Babylon is a place full of ancient tombs and treasures. Maybe my friend and his guide went poking around and...*

Oh, you are asking about the monsters? They are true, of course: ghuls, probably. Eaters of corpses, and the worst of creatures: have you ever heard the Tale of the Butcher's Wife and the Jackal*?*

Trust me, leave Babylon alone.

Healing a Sheikh in the Two Rivers Land

The river flowed gently under the barge, and I looked at the cane thicket surrounding us. Suddenly, something splashed in the water. A big rat, even bigger than the ones I knew from the back alleys of Bagdad. The splash disturbed a flight of herons, which flew away. The barge turned right in an almost invisible channel, and one of the boatmen said: "We are almost there, master barber." He was a tall, dark skinned man, wearing the thawb, the traditional long shirt of the Marsh People.

The men lead me to the reed hut, where a man was laying on the bed. The Sheikh of the Swamp People wasn't dressed any better than his subjects, and was sweating from fever. Two big, swollen goiters stood out on his neck, black and foul smelling.

"What bit him?" I asked.

"The Baxtak, the stealer of breath, crept into his hut while he slept." The boatman who lead me there said. "Can you heal him?"

Ghul Hunters

Nobody is born a ghul hunter. And, more importantly, nobody wants to become one. But in the dark tombs of the caliphate, strange monsters exist, creature which threaten all mankind. And the ghul hunters are those solitary people who are tasked with getting rid of them. When a ghul is threatening a remote village, or a djinn is infesting an oasis, your only solution is calling one of these tough individuals. They know their business, passing the lore about dark monsters from master to disciple and, more importantly, they are protected by the Almighty. It is a dangerous, and often brief life, because remember: there are only foolish ghul hunters and old ghul hunters.
But there aren't foolish old ghul hunters.

William Kvam (Order #30634634)

"I can try purging out the wounds and..."

"And?" the marsh man said.

"And pray Allah for your Sheikh's soul."

You may think our land is all desert and barren, but it isn't: the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers, in their lower courses, create a large swampy area which extends to the sea. The marshes are home of the Ma'dan, the Marsh People, a number of tribes who earn their living fishing, herding water buffalo, and tending their small fields when they can. Despite the fact that they are considered savages, Marsh People aren't: they are good followers of the Almighty, living in a dangerous land. If you haven't seen one of their villages, you have missed something: they haven't much solid ground available, so they build artificial islets of reeds, called kibasha, upon which they erect their huts. The swamp where they dwell is a magical place: strange beasts lurk in darkness, like the terrible ghul of the swamps, and the fishes, well, they are the strangest you will ever find. Have you heard the Tale of the Talking Finn*? Well, it is about a speaking fish, which can lead you to the legendary* **Hufaidh**, *an enchanted island upon which there is a garden of luscious fruits and pomegranates, growing free among palaces made of the purest silver. It's a real garden of God on earth, and for this reason it is kept hidden by the swamp djinn, who keep mortals away from it. Finding the path to Hufaidh is almost impossible, but sometimes, on dark nights, you can see a faint distant light in the swamp: they are the enchanted lights of the lost island, which try to lure incautious travelers off the path...*

An Evening on the Silk Road

...after leaving the Marsh People, I turned northward, until I reached a large road going east, the fabulous Silk Road, and I set my sore feet in the direction of Samarkand.

The road was deserted, my throat was dry as parchment, because my water supply was almost exhausted. I walked all day, alone in the desolation. Nightfall caught me by surprise, long shadows creeping out from the tree under which I stopped.

Marsh Poison and Fishing

Ma'dans are very skilled fishermen. They especially seek out the binni fish (a species of barbel), using a special fishing spear and a poison, called Datura, to catch them. The Datura, also called "white thorn apples" or "devil's trumpet", is a very insidious plant, which, if used in large doses, can kill a person (LvL 5 poison, 1 damage per scene), but it is even more insidious if used in lower doses (LvL 3): in this case, it causes hallucinations and psychosis.
More than one village has been intoxicated from eating honey made from Datura flowers, and this poison is often used by killers, including the infamous sect of the Ashashin (see page 127).

William Kwan (Order #30634634)

"You should not stop here." A voice said from the branches.

I looked up and I saw a blackbird.

"You... you are speaking!" I stuttered.

"You are too. Should I be surprised?" The creature answered.

I gazed in awe at the animal, which cocked its head and continued. "I said, you should not rest here. The dark rider haunts this road by night."

"The dark rider?" I asked.

"The angel of death." The bird continued.

A cold sweat covered me. "Where must I go?" I asked, still not sure I was talking to a bird.

"Follow me." The blackbird said, and fled in the wilderness.

"Nonsense!" Ali sputtered "My good friend the Barber is fooling us there! Talking animals don't exist!"

You remain silent, eager to continue reading. The road from Bagdad to Samarkand, part of the fabulous Silk Road, is a dangerous one: bandits and robbers abound. Have you ever heard the Tale of Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*? I am sure you have heard of it, well, the famous Forty are only one of the many bands roaming the road.*

Luckily, part of the Road is patrolled by caravan guard, and the famous **Kyrk Kyz** *girls, the Samarkand amazons. But be careful if you meet them, don't call them "girl" or "girlie" or something similar: they'll skin you alive! They are an order of warrior women, dedicated to protecting Samarkand and the Silk Road. They are exactly forty in number, and stories say that they can ride a horse, shoot a bow, and throw a spear better than any man.*

But the Silk Road isn't only a dangerous place: it is also a path of marvels, like the famous **Fountain of Ayub**, *which was created by a messenger of God himself by planting a staff in the ground, or the fabled* **House of the Kind Butcher**, *which lays somewhere along the path. Stories says that this prodigal man will feed any person who stops at his house. His meals are so good that nobody ever leaves his house...*

About Talking Animals

Despite what Ali says, stories of talking animals are quite frequent in the caliphate. Are all true? Obviously not. But I met a couple myself, and I can assure you that sometimes an animal is born with a superior intelligence, like the famous Donkey of Damascus, which is fabled for being the most trusted counselor of the king. In other cases, talking animals are only unfortunate persons transformed by some magic, who will do anything to return to human form. Finally, remember that some djinn have the power to shape change, so, always be very careful when you meet one of these creatures...

William Kwan (Order #W6914634)

A Night of Fire and Goats in the Northern Mountains

A number of pages are smeared with a brownish, sticky substance, which has ruined them. When you finally manage to read, the account begins in this way:

... then I ate plenty of the delicious, sweet dates the talking blackbird gave me as a reward, and I filled my haversack too. But I was a fool: these fruits revealed themselves to be as intoxicating as wine, and I wandered drunk and aimless for several days until I found myself, freezing on the mountain. I had no furs, and I was nearly frozen to death, when the wandering puppeteer found me. He was a rough but pleasant youth, with a goatee and a contagious smile, and an uncanny ability of moving his goat-shaped puppet.

"My friend." He said, "We don't have to freeze to death here. Nearby there is a tower, where a beautiful fire burns. We need to take it, or at least a little spark of it."

And trusting the puppeteer, I accompanied him to the tower, where a crackling fire roared in the pit, with a stone lying in the middle of it, azure as the sea. A tall, hooded man was praying in front of it. We waited for him to go and we snuck out of the shadow.

"Now!" the minstrel said, "Take the coal for you, and the stone for me!"

I obeyed, but when I picked up the blue stone, which was cold as ice, the fire howled in rage, and the Magus, for that was what the man was, returned brandishing a torch like a whip of flames!

"Let's go!" my friend said, and he ran away, with me close at his heels. But when we were outside, in the mountains, he quickly outran me, jumping from rock to rock with inhuman grace. And then I saw them: my friend had goat hooves in place of feet, and he laughed in the night, leaving me to face the rage of my pursuer...

Pffft! What a fool! Being used in this way by the **Takam, the King of Goats**! *Everybody knows that he is a trickster, a liar, and a thief. No, no, I cannot believe my good friend the Barber fell into this trap. He sneaked inside a* **Temple of Fire**, *the holiest place of the Magus, he defiled it, and deserved what happened!*

You must know, noble friend, that the followers of Zoroaster are in general good people, but some of them, the Magus in particular, like the one we saw in the Great Bazaar, aren't.

And they are very dangerous: they are capable of many sorceries, especially with fire. Do you know that in their temples there are flames which have burned from before the beginning of the time?

William Kwan (Order #30534654)

You should hear the Tale of the Stew and the Jumping Frog, *on this topic, one day or another I must tell it to you.*

But I really suspect that the Barber invented part of this story. I think he recognized the stone as what it really is: the **Anachitis**, *one of the most powerful secrets of the Magi, and wanted it for himself, even if now he is trying to blame the Takam, which is a sort of demi-god, for it.*

I wonder what the Barber did with the stone, by the way. Please, continue to read, I want to discover how the old fox saved his skin this time.

A Flight in the Night, a Banquet and a Funeral

The story of the Barber's escape continues on the next page.

... the Magus was almost on me, the fire whip cracking, the Takam nowhere to be seen, and I recommended my soul to Allah. Then I heard a flap of wings, and something lifted me into the air! The Magus disappeared below me, while I flew high. I looked up and I saw that my captor was a woman, the most beautiful one I had ever seen, but with long, feathered wings, like those of a swan!

"A Peri..." I said, recognizing a winged spirit from my grandmother's stories.

She smiled at me, and with that smile I was lost, my heart full of love for that supernatural being.

For the entire night and part of the next day we flew. The Peri was very strong and didn't falter. We left the mountains, but I cannot say in what direction we went, because I was lost in the contemplation of her beauty.

Then the Peri spoke "I saved your life, but now you must learn."

"Learn what?" I answered, bedazzled.

"To fly by yourself." She answered. And let me fall.

I cried, but the Peri didn't want me dead, because I landed on the top of a big awning, and I slid down, unharmed, into a lemon garden, landing in front of a noble man and his court.

"Who are you?" The nobleman asked, amazed, while his guards unsheathed their swords.

"A man who is learning to fly." I answered, raising my hands

William Kwan (Order #3053454)

That night, the Judge Tabar, my involuntary host, held a great banquet in my honor. Just as earlier in the afternoon, guards surrounded the hall, but the abundance of food and beverage, the singers, and a dancing odalisque kept me occupied.

The stories of my adventures amused him and his son, and so I continued to talk until darkness fell, and the hall was illuminated by the fire of lanterns.

"My lord" I asked at a certain point. "You are so kind a man. What do you need with so many guards?"

And then a lantern fell, releasing a splash of oil and scaring the courtiers away like chickens in front of the butcher's knife.

When the commotion ended, we saw the poor judge face down on his seat, a dagger planted in his back.

"Ashashin!" an odalisque cried. "The vengeance of Hassan-i Sabbah has fallen upon us!"

Only later did we discover that one of the singers had disappeared.

A Peri! My friend is the most fortunate man or the biggest liar I ever met! These spirits are usually friendly, but can be mischievous. And you must absolutely not stare into their eyes, or they'll steal your soul forever, like in the Tale of the Three Feathers of the Cobbler's Son*.*

But this isn't the most troubling part. The murder of a judge of the caliphate by an Ashashin is very serious and probably the only true part of this story. Do you know who Hassan-i Sabbah is? They call him the **Old One of the Mountain***. He is a very old man, the head of a sect of fanatical killers, the Ashashin, who obey his orders without question. The Ashashin can sneak into any place, disguised as anybody, and you cannot tell. When they are given a task, they don't stop, because they don't fear death. The Old One has used them for centuries to advance his nefarious plans. In recent years, he has been quiet in his impregnable fortress of Alamut, like a spider in its web, but now he must have felt the weakness of the Caliph, and is coming out of his den! I'm beginning to understand why someone didn't want this diary to fall into the hands of Scheherazade!*

So, what are you waiting for? Continue to read!

William Kwan (Order #30634634)

Minding My Own Business in the Alleys of Cairo

I came out of the caravanserai, and the smells of the city assaulted my nostrils. First, the putrid stench of the river Nile. It was strange that the river worshipped as the bringer of life, smelled so much of death.

Then the smell of unwashed bodies: Bagdad may be the most beautiful city in the caliphate, but Cairo is surely the most crowded.

"Noble stranger, only for you" Someone grabbed me by tunic. I turned instinctively, hand on my dagger's hilt, because thieves and bandits abound in this place.

"The peace of Allah upon you!" the man said, raising his arms "I mean no harm. I want to make your fortune!"

I watched him. Dirty, unshaven, and with a bad scar on his face. Not exactly a man to be trusted.

"What do you want?" I asked.

"Look at the powerful amulet I have here! A scarab made of the purest gold. Coming directly from the pyramids. It will protect you in your travels."

"And why are you selling such a marvel?" I asked suspiciously.

The man didn't manage to answer because in that very moment a commotion erupted from a nearby alley.

Four men, dressed in white, dragged a woman, clearly against her will. They were led by a fifth man, shrouded in a white cloak and holding a strange snake-shaped staff.

"A priest of Apep!" the amulet-peddler whispered. "Let's get away!"

"What are they doing to that woman?" I asked.

"Sacrifice." He pointed to the black shapes of the pyramids, shivering. "Tonight, someone will die in the name of the Old Pharaohs!"

It was my turn to shiver.

"So, about the amulet?" the peddler asked, smiling.

William Kwan (Order #3053454)

Egypt was conquered by the Prophet many years ago, but these people have never really become part of us. It is a strange land: the river Nile crosses it, like a blue scimitar stuck in the heart of the sands. Every year it floods, bringing new life to the surrounding lands.

In the past, the Egyptians considered the river a god, and they had a number of other ones, which today rest, undisturbed, in the pyramids, those massive tombs hovering over the city. The forces of good are powerful in Cairo, mainly represented by the Sheikh and his sons, but not as many are those forces of evil magic and sorceries which abound in Egypt. And the pyramids... they hide great treasures of the old Egyptian kingdom and the mummies of the old kings, which they believed to be gods. A number of forbidden cults still worship them, their members ready to do anything to bring the ancient lords back to life.

Speaking of weirdness, have you ever heard the Tale of the Riddle of the Sphinx*? Well, yes, you can think the sphinx is only that big building you see on the horizon, but it isn't: the Sphinx really exists, and lays hidden somewhere in the desert. She occasionally ambushes travelers, asking them a riddle: those who answer correctly will be rewarded beyond their imagination, while the others... well, they aren't found anymore, so I imagine that the Sphinx ate them!*

The Desert Robbers of Syria

You turn the page, finding some trace of sand upon the paper, and a lock of black hair.

... then I kissed her for the last time, and went away, fearing her husband's return, because only a fool doesn't fear a mage. She wept, and cut a lock of hair for me.

I joined a caravan hastily, passing the gates of Bagdad just in time. I was safe, I thought. Then I asked the caravan master where we were headed. "Harrath-Al-Shamah." He answered. The Black Desert.

My heart sank.

Long days passed, only divided by the cold, starry nights and the few rare oases. "Don't worry, friend barber, tomorrow we will be at the oasis of Palmyra..." The caravan master said, trying to encourage me. Then he fell down, an arrow in his chest.

"The Golden Jackal! We are lost!" a merchant screamed, huddling behind a camel.

The Bedouins charged down the hill, howling, scimitars and daggers shimmering in the sun.

William Kwan (Order #5053545)

And I did the only thing a man could do: I prayed to Allah and ran away into the desert.

South of Bagdad, the desert starts. A vast sea of silt, it continues far way, spreading through all of Arabia southward, and to Damascus and beyond westward.

Few people live in the desert: Bedouins are some of them. Nomads, herders, and often raiders, they are a fierce, blue-eyed people. Nobody can be a worse enemy or a better friend than a Bedouin.

The most feared one of them is **Harun-Bal**, *the* **Rebel Sheikh**. *He commands a large horde of warriors, which have always been a nuisance to the caliphate. But ever since our lordship the Caliph retired, he has become even bolder, his raids reaching even the outskirts of Bagdad. The Golden Jackal, so called for his blonde beard, which is very unusual in the desert people, is a dangerous man with a clever mind, but not as dangerous as his son, Sayf, the right hand of the sheikh, who is as bloodthirsty as a desert lion.*

Have you heard how he was born? Well, one day the Sheikh found a lost lion cub in the desert, and he took it. He raised it and became attached to it, so much so that he asked a desert witch to transform him into a man, who is now his son. At least, this is what the Tale of the Sword and the Lion *says.*

The Man who Sang to the Serpents and the Woman Who Loved Him

...and so I ran alone into the desert, without water, mount, or any food apart from a single date which I found at the bottom of my pocket.

I walked for the whole night without any idea of the right direction and, at midday, I was so thirsty I could have drunk the hair lotion in my barber's bag, the only liquid I had.

So I prayed to the Almighty, ate my date, and throw the stone into the air. I looked in the direction that it fell, and decided to go that way.

And being the Lord merciful, it was the right direction, because, at dusk, I saw an oasis.

The Secret of Iram

I am pretty sure you have heard of it, my friend. No? Where did you live before today? Under a fig tree? Well, the name of Iram is recurrent in the caravanserais and the oases of the desert. It is a lost city, older even than the caliphate. There are riches hidden there, and strange, old creatures. But more important and precious than any gold or jewels, there is a well in the city, where a powerful djinn dwells, the Guardian of the Well. If you throw a coin into it, the spirit will fulfill your wishes. I met a man who was lost in the desert, starving and mad, who babbled about the city, but he died soon after. He was a blind, poor soul, with two emeralds in his eye-sockets.

No, no, I swear, it is an original story! I am not retelling you the Story of the Man with the Green Eyes, you offend me!

William Kwan (Order #3059454)

ABOUT THE DJINN

I know, I know, my friend, I can see (figuratively, of course, being blind) that you are literally dying to know something about the djinn. Well, the Prophet says that the thirst of knowledge of the young ones must be quenched (I am pretty sure he said that...), so hear my words.

Are djinn Real? Yes, my friend, they are very real, even if the majority of the people will never see one in all their lives.

What are djinn? It's a complicated question: commoners use the word 'djinn' to refer to any supernatural creature, but for the hakims, it has a precise meaning, referring to a large class of spirits, capable of assuming human form, and gifted with amazing abilities. Various types of them exist, from the spirits of the wind howling in the desert, to the dangerous Quarinah, the woman-like beings which feed on the dreams of mortals, to the Efreet, the spirits of fire and death, and the most dangerous of them all, the Marid, who rebelled against the Almighty.

Are the djinn Dangerous? Merciful Allah, they are! They aren't all inherently evil, but are spirits, and follow their own rules. Some djinn are bound to an object or a place (have you heard the Tale of Aladdin and the Magic Lamp?) and grant wishes to humans. But these gifts always come with some strings attached: for example, their fulfillment is literal, or, more dangerous, they ask for a price, usually the soul of the mortal, or something equally precious.

Where did the djinn Come From? Hakims debate whether they are spirits of nature, roaming free in the world from forgotten eras, or whether they have an ancestral home in the skies or in the depths of hell. The true answer is that nobody really knows: I suspect that different types of djinn come from different places, but it's only my opinion.

What Can djinn Do? The short answer is: almost anything. A powerful Djiin can summon food and riches, defeat your enemies, or cause a terrible flood. But they cannot alter the past, and, most importantly, cannot interfere with the free will of mortals. For example, no Djiin can make a princess like Scheherazade love someone like well... that rabble thief, Aladdin.

How Must I Handle djinn? With great caution. In the direst cases, if you are forced to fight such a spirit, remember that they cannot be wounded by anything apart from magic and the blessings of Allah. The best thing for you to do is trying to outsmart them, because their greatest weakness is that they must respect a pact made, and cannot disobey their master (whoever controls them in that moment).

William Kwan (Order #5053545451)

It was a verdant place, with a spring which quenched my thirst, and some unknown fruits which tasted good. I lay down under the stars, deciding to sleep there, when I heard music coming from nearby, like that of a flute. Curious, I stood up and followed the sound, and I found the mouth of a cavern, from whence the music came.

Without any hesitation, I went inside.

The cavern was dark, apart from a cone of moonlight, coming from a hole in the ceiling, which lit the center of the space, where I witnessed a strange scene. Sitting on a throne of stone, there was a woman, garbed in a long dress which flowed to the ground, covering her legs, but leaving the face unveiled. She was beautiful, but haughty. At her feet stood a man, bare chested and thin, who was playing a flute. I recognized him from his poor clothes, he was a fakir.

I boldly stepped into the light and introduced myself.

The woman cocked her head, and evaluated me, flicking her tongue for a moment, absentmindedly, while the fakir continued to play.

"Welcome stranger" she said, "to the kingdom of Samaran.", smiling in a way I didn't like at all.

"Kingdom?" I asked politely "I didn't know there were any kingdoms in the Arabian desert."

"Oh yes, indeed, there is, and you are among my subjects now." she added, smiling, and I had a glimpse of a forked tongue. "Because I am Samaran, the Queen of the Serpents."

With terror, I saw in the darkness a mass of crawling reptilians just outside the circle of light, staring at us with shimmering eyes.

"Please sit here with my husband Cassim." she added. "I think you'll be the sole guests at our wedding."

I saw the sweat on the forehead of the fakir, and I understood it was the magic of his music keeping the snakes at bay. I cannot say for how long the fakir had been playing, but I knew he was on the verge of exhaustion.

I bowed, and with a flourish, I extracted a small bottle from my barber's bag.

"Praise Allah for my luck then! May I offer a gift to the most beautiful bride I have ever seen, and her lucky groom?"

"What is it?" the Queen of Serpents stared at me, with suspicion.

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"Juice of the fruit of love, sweeter than any you have drunk before. The best gift for a new couple", and I sipped a bit of it from a thimble I found in my bag.

Seeing that I was fine, Samaran asked for the bottle, and I saw something moving under her dress, and it was not legs, but a long, serpentine tail.

The Queen of Serpents drank directly from the bottle, and after a while, she started smiling foolishly, blinking, and then she fell asleep.

Cassim, who wasn't a fool, gathered his last strength and played in higher tones. The snakes, heads swaying from side to side, moved away, leaving a space for us to escape.

"What was it?" He asked me, when we were safely outside "Poison?"

"Nay." I shook my head. "Only a bottle of perfume. But it contained so much spirit that it could intoxicate an elephant."

But Samaran must have been stronger than an elephant, because at that moment she woke up from her stupor, and we heard her shouts of rage: "Come back, come back infidel, and you my sweet groom, come back to my loving fangs!"

I and my new friend looked at each other once, and ran away from the oasis as fast as we could, preferring the sands of the desert to the scaly charms of the ophidians' queen.

Ah! The Barber fleeing away from a woman! It remembers well the night when we snuck into the harem of Pasha Firoud to ... eh, to check that the wives of our good friend Firoud were all safe.

But perhaps it is better not to speak of this now, rather, there is something odd in this tale. In the page you read before, he was in Syria, and now in Arabia. Are some pages missing? Let me feel the book.

Yes, it could be, or perhaps the Barber could have left something untold for some reason.

Well, the path to Arabia is a long and difficult one. There are a number of caravan trails to bring people to the city of the Prophet, which every good Muslim must visit once in their life, but this doesn't mean that they are safe.

The Caliph's servants try to keep them guarded, but bandits abound there too, as dangerous as beasts, like in the Tale of the Pilgrim and the Wise Scorpion*. Have you ever heard it? Well, you should, it teaches you how to answer such a beast in case one talks to you.*

Talking animals aren't the worst danger you will find in that place: a sandstorm, or losing your way can kill you faster than any bandit, snake, or scorpion. But the desert is also a magical place: for example, somewhere in the sands there is a wadi, a ravine, where the Herb of Immortality grows,

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after Prince Bulukya lost a seed on the ground, as told in the Tale of the Bag and the Lost Prince.

In the end, if you survive the voyage, with all its threats and temptations, you reach Mecca, the holiest place in the world, where the Black Stone lays. I made my Hajj, the pilgrimage, many years ago, when I was young and I still had sight. Don't make me weep, my friend, let's go on reading.

The Lake Which Didn't Exist

... so it came to pass that me and my new friend Cassim the Fakir were stranded in the vast desert of Arabia. For seven days and seven nights we marched, lost and without water. I asked how he had ended in the clutches of the Serpent Queen, but he wasn't very talkative. This was not a problem, as I spoke enough for both of us.

Then, one day, behind a dune, I saw it: a large lake of blue water, shimmering like a jewel in the navel of an odalisque!

"Water! Water!" I cried and ran to the lake, ignoring Cassim's warning.

I reached the lake's shore and I jumped into the water, but I found only dust. The lake was an illusion, created by some evil djinn and my sun scorched head.

"Oh Almighty!" I threw sand on my head, "Please save us, or at least give us another date to find the road!"

"Maybe the Lord heard your prayers." My close-mouthed friend reached me, and pointed a bony finger southward.

In place of the false lake a city stood, a very real one, the top of its minarets shimmering with gold.

We ran toward the city, crying for help, but nobody answered. We found it deserted, inhabited only by the wind. With Cassim's help, which he seemed to have a knack for, we found a well, and there was still water inside. We quenched our thirst, while we asked ourselves why this place was abandoned, given that there was plenty of water. The sun set, the night started, and so the desert's cold came down on us.

I was freezing and starving, while Cassim meditated near me. The fellow seemed impervious to the elements and human needs, and I started being a little envious of him. Then I saw a small plume of smoke coming from the middle of the city. After a brief consultation, we decided to look for it.

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The smoke came from the top of a tower, the tallest of the city. We looked for a door, but we didn't find one, only a window on the highest floor. We called aloud, but nobody answered.

We needed a rope to climb, and we took the one from the well, but the tower wall offered no purchase for it.

But it wasn't a problem for my friend Cassim. The fakir sat cross-legged, and at the sound of his flute, the rope rose up, hard as a pole. I climbed it with some difficulties, and eventually I reached the top, curious to see who dwelt in so remote a shelter.

But what I saw was even wilder than what I had imagined. Peering into the window, I saw a lavish room, paved of carpets, where a young, raven haired girl was sitting, warming herself near a cracking fireplace. She was so beautiful that, for a moment, I forgot my Peri love, although this girl was strangely familiar.

"My lady! My lady!" I called, and she finally noticed me. She stood up and ran to the window, which was barred by golden bars.

"Who are you?" She asked.

I introduced myself, as courteously as I could, given the fact that I was hanging from the top of an enchanted rope, and she did the same.

"I am Dunyazad." She simply said.

And so I recognized her! She was the sister of our beloved princess Scheherazade! But what was she doing there, alone and imprisoned?

"It is a long, incredible story, fellow Barber." she said. "He locked me inside, and summoned a powerful guardian to guard this place."

"Who locked you?" I asked "What guardian?"

"THIS guardian!" the girl said with wide blue eyes.

The wind howled, savagely around me, and I saw distinctly a pair of angry eyes in it.

And then the rope's magic ended, and I fell.

Dunyazad! Scheherazade's sister! It can see why the Barber returned to Bagdad in such haste.

And I start to understand why he was imprisoned: someone doesn't want this information to reach the ears of the Caliph and of the Vizier.

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But my friend doesn't write where that city is! The desert of Arabia is enormous, and full of danger, they say.

Robbers and bandits are only the most minor of the perils there. There are monsters, real ones, among those sands. Why are you looking at me in this way? Never head the Tale of Yusuf and The Thing under the Sand? *It is an enormous beast guarding the access to the underground City of Brass, the realm of the djinn.*

And it isn't the only tale I have heard about that far-away place. There are even wilder ones, like the Tale of the Half Man who Runs in the Desert*... but well, I am digressing again.*

We must focus on the diary, perhaps there is some clue as to where the mirage lake is, go on reading, if you please.

Adventures by Sea

I turned the next page, and I found a big feather in the middle of the book, golden in color, which released a smattering of thin gold powder onto the pages. Puzzled, I continued reading.

... despite my efforts, I could not find Cassim or the mirage lake anymore. I wept, prayed for his soul and that of Dunyazad, and decided to go back to Bagdad to report the fact to her father, Jafar the Vizier, and to our beloved Caliph. The dusty road I found brought me to the coastal city of Musqat.

I found a ship, the captain being a certain Abdul the Marvelous, a renowned merchant and mariner who I was introduced to years ago by my old friend Sinbad. He hugged me, and told me that his ship was going back to Bagdad after long travels in faraway lands.

I asked him for passage, and he welcomed me on board like a son. And so, on the tenth day of Ramadan, we set sail.

For once, the Almighty was on my side.

For a week we sailed until the dead calm hit us, and believe me, this is the worst suffering that can fall on mariners, because we almost exhausted our water supplies.

Then the wind started again, and we sailed, with throats dry as parchment, until we saw a verdant island, with a tall peak in the middle.

Dunyazad

Dunyazad is Scheherazade's younger sister. Tales says that she was the one who suggested that her sister tell a story with a cliffhanger every night, because she knew Scheherazade knew a number of them.

Other tales say that she can see the future with her strange blue eyes, but if this is true, why didn't she warn her sister about the doom that was going to fall on her?

I even heard that she could speak the language of birds, but, well, I never saw her doing so.

I have heard that she disappeared from the palace the same night that Scheherazade fell asleep, but those stories are unconfirmed.

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We were safe!

But from the top of the peak an enormous bird rose.

"A roc! A roc!" The crewmen cried, as, I cannot deny, did I.

And then Abdul took his mighty Persian bow and shot, hitting the beast in the wing. With a shriek, the mighty raptor fled away, and we raised the sails and turned the ship's prow.

I gathered a feather from the roc, planning to present it as a gift to the Caliph, if merciful Allah would guide me back home at the end of this journey...

The Persian Gulf has always been one of the preferred ways for merchants and travelers to reach the borders of the caliphate, and even go beyond them: a ship setting off from Basra, at the delta of the Tigris and Euphrates, can reach Arabia in few weeks, India in some months, and, if you are skilled enough, even far-away Quin.

Or, if you are unlucky, you can end up in some far-away, still-uncharted place.

Yes, because sailing in this era isn't easy at all: have you ever heard the Tales of The Travels of Sinbad the Sailor*? Well, the Barber probably isn't the most sincere man in the world, but I think he has truly seen the roc, the giant-sized bird, even if perhaps it isn't as big as he leads us to believe.*

And I have even heard of cannibals on these islands: savage primitive people who eat the flesh of fellow humans.

And that isn't the weirdest thing I have heard: Sinbad told me once that one night he moored near a lush, jungle-covered island, and during the night he heard a mighty bellow: the island itself was a giant turtle, so big that it was covered in plants and inhabited by animals!

On this topic I must add that...

The Book's End

Suddenly you hear a sound in the library.

Ali is blind, but fast as a snake in turning back. Two soldiers, wearing red and white uniforms, stood in the doorway.

"The Vizier's guards!" The beggar curses. "How did they find us?"

Good question. The only better one you have, is how is it possible that a blind person can recognize guards from their footsteps?

"No time for this!" Ali says "Quick! Grab the diary! We must go!"

William Kwan (Order #30834654)

Keeping the book close to your chest, and guiding Ali by the elbow, you reach the big window behind you, while the guards, swords unsheathed, prepare to stab you!

"We must go to the roof." you whisper to your friend.

"On the roof? Me? A blind man! Oh merciful Allah, I'll fall down before going five steps!" Ali complains.

You open the window, grab the upper balcony and…

… the rest of this adventure is yours to continue!

Now you know enough of the world of Scheherazade to plunge into it. Continue to the next chapter, Character Creation, where you'll learn how to make your hero.

But be quick, the Arabian nights await, with their dangers and fascinations!

Are you ready to face them?

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Character Creation

"I am only the smartest, nimblest, boldest thief of Bagdad. And I am here to steal your heart. Maybe you have heard of me."

-Aladdin, the Greatest Thief of Bagdad

The first step into adventure is creating your hero, your alter-ego in the caliphate of the Eternal Moon. It's an easy task, which the players can do all together, with the help of the Storyteller, following the steps described in this chapter.

1 Choose a Name and Concept

Take a spare Character Sheet, find a suitable Name for the hero (or heroine) and write it in the indicated place. Now it is the moment to start thinking about who the hero is. Is he a crafty mariner like Sinbad? A poor orphan destined to become a hero like Aladdin? Or a smart servant girl like Morgana?

This is called the "Concept", which describes in two or three words what your hero is and wants.

If you are stuck, you can randomly roll your Concept on the Birthright Scrolls Table on page 42, or simply read it to get inspired.

When you decide what your Concept is, write it near the Name and also *check the first box of the Concept Score.*

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Example. Sarah wants to create a heroine who is fast, daring, and a good fighter. Her ideas are perfect for a dervish, a nimble holy warrior of the desert. So Aliyaya the Blue, a Dedicated Dervish, is born. Let's see how she'll develop…

2 Attributes

A *Scheherazade* hero is defined by six numerical Attributes, coupled in opposing pairs. They are:

Power [POW]. Your strength and raw power. Useful in melee combat.

Precision [PRE]. Your accuracy and finesse. Useful in ranged combat and delicate tasks.

Courage [COU]. Your bravery and audacity in the face of danger.

Caution [CAU]. The opposite of courage. Your common sense and defensive reactions. Useful to get out of harm's way.

Passion [PAS]. Your empathy, wisdom, and capacity to talk with others.

Reason [REA]. Your rationality and knowledge.

In addition, you also have a seventh, special Attribute.

Resources [RES]. It defines your wealth, contacts, and connections.

Mark the first box of every Attribute.

The number of fully filled boxes shows how good your hero is in an Attribute, from 1 (poor) to 6 (exceptional), and also influences your Energies values.

Poor. You can begin with zero Resources and an additional Mark, but in this case, you will be poor and homeless (you begin with three normal pieces of Gear but no Keyword Point).

3 Spend Marks

You have 12 Marks to spend on your Concept or Attributes tracks, or to acquire Magic.

Spending a Mark simply means filling in the leftmost empty box on a track (of the Concept or of an Attribute). Higher boxes are split into two or four. They require more Marks to be filled. Only filled boxes count for the purposes of the Attribute value.

Status - Gifted. If you want your hero to be able to use magic, use 2 Marks and write Gifted in the Status line. This means that they can use magic, but they don't know any spells yet. To acquire spells, you must spend 1 Mark to learn 2 Common Spells of your choice (you can do this multiple times). See the Magic Chapter for more details on this process.

Example. Sarah imagines Aliyaya as a rather young girl, physically slender, but very stubborn and hot tempered. So, she decides to spend 4 Marks each in Passion and Courage and one in the four remaining Attributes.

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BIRTHRIGHT SCROLL

The Birthright Scroll is a way to randomly generate a thematically appropriate Concept. Simply roll a d66 on the table below to discover who you are.

If you want, add some personalization to the Concept, adding a descriptive word, like "Old", "Young", "Crafty" etc... the more detailed the Concept, the better it will work in the game.

Obviously, the Concept listed below are only suggestions. Feel free to add your own and, if you don't like the result, to reroll.

Birthright Scroll Table

D66	RESULT	DESCRIPTION
11-12	Beggar	Some people are born with a golden spoon. You aren't one of them. But you are smart, nimble, and resourceful. Your home is under the open sky, and the kindness of others your lunch.
13-14	Takamchee/ Poet	A wandering minstrel and puppeteer of the mountains of northern Persia, welcome in any house. Otherwise, you may be a person of letters, whose poems and stories will live forever.
15-16	Thief	You are a skilled burglar and adventurer, no treasure is safe from your deft hands, nor is any merchant's fat purse!
21-22	Hunter	Savvy in the ways of the wild, no prey can escape your arrows, and no track is too difficult to follow.
23-24	Laborer	Not every hero is born a swordsman. You are a humble worker: a woodcutter, a fisherman, a smith, or whatever, even a stable hand. But humble origins don't mean you aren't destined for greatness
25-26	Sailor	You are a person of the sea (or of the river), who has seen (or would like to see) many exotic places.
31-32	Guard	You are a trusted soldier of the Caliph or of some noble.
33-34	Nomad/Caravan Rider	You are a Bedouin, or another type of nomad. Your mount is your best friend, and what lies behind the next dune your goal. Alternatively, you are a caravan rider, crossing the deserts on the back of your trusty camel or horse looking for adventure... and the next oasis.
35-36	Prince/Princess	You are the son or daughter of an important noble of the caliphate. Are you rich and spoiled, or a compassionate leader of your people?

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Scheherazade's mood and stories encourage role-play and atypical characters. Feel free to devise a Concept you won't usually take in other RPGs and get out of your comfort zone: an orphan, an old crone, even a talking animal!

D66	RESULT	DESCRIPTION
41-42	Dervish	You are part of a sect of holy warriors dedicated to fighting evil. Your skill with the sword and spear is legendary.
43-44	Ghul Hunter	There are things in the old tombs of the caliphate, which have always been there. Sometimes they creep out, and someone must stop them. That someone is you, a trained monster hunter.
45-46	Fakir	You are a holy ascetic, capable of incredible feats of body and mind.
51-52	Samarkand Amazon	You are (or were) one of the famous forty female warriors of the fortress of Kyrk Kyz, tasked with protecting the Silk Road. You are inferior to no man, and a fighter superior to many of them.
53-54	Odalisque	Your dance or a stare from your long-lashed eyes can win a kingdom, as beautiful are the many stories you can tell.
55-56	Hakim	You are a wise and learned person. Many Hakims are also skilled healers.
61-62	Merchant	Wherever there is profit to be had, you are there. Your tongue is golden, your wares marvelous... usually.
63-64	Foreigner	You are a ferengee, a stranger coming from the cold lands of the north.. Your appearance and your demeanor mark you as a stranger. How you happened to be in these lands is surely a tale worth telling.
65-66	Mage	You are wise in the arts of magic. It's a dangerous path, but one which can make someone immensely powerful, or damn their soul forever.

William Kwan (Order #3059545)

4 Calculate Secondary Attributes

Life indicates how much your hero is resistant to damage and fatigue. When it drops to zero, you are Defeated. The value of Life is shown by the *number of Hearts boxes that you have fully marked.*

Energy indicates how much magical power your hero has. It is used to fuel magic, and it represents your mental balance. When it drops to zero, you are tired and incapable of doing magic. The value of Energy is shown by the *number of Stars boxes that you have fully marked.*

Circle Boxes. If you have circle boxes marked, they can count as Life or Energy, as you want (but not both). Square boxes instead have no effect.

Example. Aliyaya has 4 fully marked Hearts and Stars boxes, thus giving her 4 in both Life and Energy.

5 Choose a Unique Gift

Every hero has a special ability which makes him or her unique and different from any other, their Unique Gift. Unique Gifts are usually very strongly tied to your Concept.

To create your Unique Gift, follows these steps:

A. *Create an evocative name for your Unique Gift*, something that represents it. Write it on the Character Sheet, writing in brackets [1x1] after the name. The two numbers represent respectively the Scope and the Rank of your Unique Gift, but for now ignore this, it will be useful as your hero grows stronger.

B. *Define the Scope of the Unique Gift triggers.* Unique Gifts are useful and powerful, but don't apply all the time, only in certain situations. A strict Scope usually allows you to choose a somewhat stronger mechanic. Try to think about when your Gift triggers, and write it in this form. "When [a condition] applies, then…".

C. Now it's the moment to define what your Unique Gift does! You can *choose or randomly select a mechanic* from the list below by rolling a die. Note that the mechanic is purposely generic. Using your imagination, and with the help of the Storyteller, you should personalize it to fit your idea. When you have decided on the mechanic, complete the phrase above. In the end you should have something like this:

"When *[the condition]* applies, I can *[do this]*."

William Kwan (Order #30634634)

1 Technique

As you'll read in the Game Rules chapter, Attributes are used in pairs to perform actions. For example, to hit an enemy with a sword, you use Power and Courage. A Technique means that you have developed a personal way to perform a task with an unusual Attribute. When the Storyteller tells you to roll on two Attributes to use your Unique Gift, you can substitute one of the Attribute for another, this representing "your method" of doing something.

Example. Healing wounds is usually done by rolling on Reason and Passion, but Jamad the Old Soldier has a Unique Gift called Rough Healer. When he heals wounds, he always uses Courage (using it in place of Reason or Passion).

2 Knack

You have a natural gift for something. You can reduce the result of a die by 1 point to give +1 to another die (you cannot reduce a die below 1 or raise it higher than 6).

Example. Farah the Archer, has the Eagle Eye Knack. Whenever she shoots with a bow, she can reduce by one the result of a die to give +1 to another die.

3 Training

You are a master of some field. When you are performing a particular task, you can decide to not roll and to treat half your total dice as successes (so if you would normally roll 8 dice, you automatically obtain 4 successes). Only roll the Fate die, but don't consider it for successes, only to see if there is a Consequence.

Example. Prince Rostam was trained with the sword from infancy, and he has the Master Swordsman Training. Whenever he fights with a sword, he can decide to not roll, but instead to treat half his total dice as successes.

4 Ally/Relic

You have a Level 1 Ally of your choice. An Ally gives you a number of bonus dice equal to double their level in 3 particular tasks, but has the drawback that they can be lost, killed, or wounded in combat.

Allies in combat. As a rule of thumb, if an Ally is useful in combat, they can suffer damage as well: whenever you would suffer damage in combat and the Fate Dice rolled 1, it means your Ally suffers one point of damage in place of you. You can also decide to willingly let your Ally take one damage for you. An Ally reduced to zero Life is Defeated, exactly like a hero.

You can also take this Unique Gift to obtain a minor magical item decided by the Storyteller

Example. Kusra the Sand Wanderer has a special connection with Tariq, his dromedary. The two of them are actually more brothers than rider and mount. Tariq is a Level 1 Ally which helps Kusra with any task related to riding, combat, and, being always very hungry, finding food.

William Kwan (Order #5059454)

More on Allies

Allies, apart from granting a useful mechanic, are generically helpful characters: for example, you can ask a servant to go fetch something for you, a horse to carry you on your back and so on.

On the other side, Allies aren't slaves, and should be well-treated: an Ally with an abusive master will probably go away or even betray him...

William Kwan (Order #50594381)

5 Effort

Concentration is everything, and with this Unique Gift you can spend Energy or Life (to be chosen when taking the Gift) to obtain two bonus dice, or to perform a special effect.

Example. Khalid the Strong is a mariner who once held up the broken mast of his ship during a storm. This is because Khalid is Strong as an Ox: when he performs a task of pure strength, per each Energy he spends lets him roll two extra dice.

6 Special

Your Unique Gift is really unique. It can be a capacity like "I can see invisible things", or, "I can be Defeated, but I cannot really be killed", or can be an exception to a rule. Discuss what you desire with the Storyteller. If the ability is very powerful, the Storyteller limit it in some way, such as saying that it can only be used a number of times per session equal to a certain Attribute value, or even limiting it to one use per session (in this case, you can purchase additional uses by paying a Moon Point).

Example 1. Princess Abha always loved to hear the nightingale chirping in her father's garden. Imagine what her surprise was the day she discovered her Unique Gift: she can Talk with Birds!

Example 2. Faruk the Assassin has the Poisoner! Unique Gift. During the game, he can say a person with which he interacted (hit in combat, ate together at a banquet, and so on) was poisoned (applying the Poison Opponents Keyword). Since this gift is very powerful, the Storyteller says it can be used only once per point of Reason Faruk has. Having Reason 3, it can be used thrice per session. Not bad at all!

More on Unique Gifts

The Unique Gift is decided by the player, but the Storyteller can veto it.

If your Unique Gift isn't perfect, or doesn't quite work the way you wanted, don't worry, at the end of the session you can tweak it a bit, until you find the "right" Gift. In the same manner, the Storyteller can ask you to change a Gift which is too powerful.

Alternatively, if you are feeling lucky or adventurous, you can roll on the Scroll of Secrets Table to generate a random Unique Gift!

Example. Sarah is intrigued by acrobatic sword fighting, and she wants Aliyaya to be something like a dancing blade despite being small and thin. First, she needs a cool name for her Unique Gift, something linked to the holy aspect of the dervishes: "Blade of the Almighty" is perfect! It will be a Technique. When Aliyaya fights with a sword, she can always roll on Passion. It is rather powerful, so the Storyteller accepts it, but asks Sarah to add that Aliyaya must also be unarmored to use the Technique. It fits the character.

William Kwan (Order #3059454)

SCROLL OF SECRETS

If you are stuck in creating your Unique Gift, roll a d66 and check the table below.

[*] Only for Gifted characters. If your hero isn't Gifted, re-roll on the table

D66	UNIQUE GIFT
11	I have a special combat Technique
12	I have a special healing Technique
13	I have a special social interaction Technique
14	I have a special stealth Technique
15	I have a special magical Technique*
16	I have a special perception Technique
21	I have a Knack for strategy and commanding people
22	I have a Knack for riding and taming beasts
23	I have a Knack for sailing ships
24	I have a Knack for seeing things afar and shooting with a bow
25	I have a Knack for healing people and soothing emotions
26	I have a Knack for opening locks and climbing walls

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31	I am Trained in warfare (swordsmanship, archery, tactics)
32	I am Trained in tending wounds
33	I am Trained in soothing words
34	I am Trained in seeing things before others
35	I am Trained in passing unnoticed
36	I am Trained in knowing ancient things and far-away lands
41	I have an Ally who helps me in combat, perception, and a minor activity
42	I have an Ally who helps me in social interactions, healing, and a minor activity
43	I have an Ally who helps me in lore, sneaking, and a minor activity
44	I have an offensive Magical Item (a sword, a wand, a bow)
45	I have a defensive Magical Item (a shield, a suit of armor, an amulet)
46	I have a miscellaneous Magical Item (a rope, a lamp, a ring)
51	I am really strong: I can spend Energy (or Life) to have extra dice in feats of strength
52	I am really nimble: I can spend Energy (or Life) to have extra dice in feats of agility
53	I am really learned: I can spend Energy (or Life) to have extra dice in feats of intelligence
54	I am really charismatic: I can spend Energy (or Life) to have extra dice in feats of persuasion
55	I can reach peaks of concentration: I can spend Energy (or Life) to have extra dice in feats of precision.
56	I know a lot of people: I can spend Energy (or Life) to have extra dice in rolls of Resources.
61	I can see something that others don't see (invisible things, treasures, the future…)
62	I have a particular Keyword which can apply without need of equipment (for example, I can pick locks using only my fingers – they count as a Tool, or, I am a skilled martial artist and my unarmed attacks are Vicious)
63	I can communicate with particular beings (animals, spirits, undead)
64	I can cause/resist damage in an unusual way (for example, I can summon water in the lungs of my enemies, or I can resist fire damage or the attacks of undead)
65	I alter a game rule (I have 2 additional Energy points, I consider 5-6 as 6 on the Fate Die, I give an extra die when Helping in an action)
66	I can do a really powerful thing only once per session (become an animal, dispel magic, automatically succeed in an action)

William Kwan (Order #3053454)

6 Moon Point

You start with 1 Moon Point (mark it on the Character Sheet). Moon Points are very rare and prized, they could save your life. Use them only when necessary!

7 Select Equipment

You begin with *your clothes and three pieces of gear linked to your Concept*, while your Resources value tells you your general wealth level (see sidebar). You Resources also indicate how many Keyword Points of gear you have at the beginning of the game. Apart from the items with **Keywords**, you can ignore non-descript initial items until you use them the first time.

Example. Aliyaya is a wandering warrior, so she doesn't need much. She has Resources 1, so she gets 1 Keyword Point of Gear. Her most prized possession is her sword, so Sarah spends the Keyword Point to give it the Vicious Keyword: every time she rolls a 6 when attacking, she deals one additional damage. Then Sarah picks Aliyaya's blue dervish clothes, her mother's earrings, and leaves space for another item which she can choose during the game.

Optional Rule: External Connections

The starting connections of player characters are, by default, other party members, but, if the Storyteller allows, a hero can choose a non-player character or organization as starting connection, for example. If more characters share the same external connection, this creates a bond

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8 Connections and Backstory

If you want, you can add some background to your hero or heroine, by choosing at least *one connection with another* (or more than one) *party member*. You can also *describe how your character was involved with Scheherazade*.

Do this part only if you want to. It is perfectly fine to jump into the adventure with very sketchy details, and invent others during play.

Example. Sarah has some ideas about Aliyaya's backstory, but at the moment she doesn't want to invest too much in it. Obviously, her mother has a role in it, given that she keeps a memento of her. She decides that Scheherazade helped her, a girl, be accepted into the Dervish lodge, when she was very young. As a Connection with the other players, she decides to have been sent to Bagdad to become the apprentice of Abbas, an old but famous Ghul Hunter (another player character).

Now Aliyaya is ready to play!

between them. External connections can grant some help, but also cause problems (and be a source of adventures).

Example. Semir the Thief chooses as connection the Band of Zalasta, a notorious group of robbers. Ali the Beggar do the same. In this way the heroes have something in common. Zalasta's band can be a source of info and a good place to fence goods, but eventually Zalasta himself, the band's chief, would ask something in return to the heroes...

Resources and Standard of Living

The Resources attribute describes your wealth and your connections at the same time. In Scheherazade, you don't take account of every dinar you spend, so the following table can be useful to give you an idea on how rich your hero is.

Standards of Living Table

RES.	WEALTH LEVEL
0	**Poor.** You have ragged clothes and must beg for food.
1	**Standard.** You are a farmer, a small artisan, or something similar. You can pay for you food, and have a small house somewhere.
2	**Well-Off.** You are a skilled artisan, a small land owner, or have a fine shop in the town with a servant or two. You must work, but thanks to Almighty God, food is never missing from your table.
3	**Rich.** You are indubitably rich, like a highly-sought Hakim, or a counselor of the Caliph. You have a number of servants.
4	**Noble.** You have no financial problems. You have a beautiful mansion with many servants, and an important post or social position (for example, you can be a rich merchant, or an Emir's son).
5	**Very Rich and Noble.** You have a palace or other luxurious mansion, many servants, and have never worked a day in your life.
6	**Fabulously Rich.** Your wealth rivals that of the Caliph. You have many palaces, legions of servants, and basically whatever material goods you want.

William Kwan (Order #3059454)

Game Rules

"Of course the bones aren't weighted! Who do you think I am?"

-Ali, blind beggar of Bagdad

The greatest part of a *Scheherazade* game is a simple conversation between the players and the Storyteller. Only when the situation becomes uncertain do the game's rules kick in, and the dice are rolled.

But before getting into the crunchy, mechanical discussion, we have two recommendations for the Storyteller.

Roll Only when Really Necessary. One of the temptations that Storytellers have is to make players roll for everything. Don't do it. Only ask for a roll when the outcome of the roll really changes the situation.

Reward Players' Choices. If a player makes the right decision, don't make them roll. For example, if a player explicitly asks if there is a secret door in the Caliph's closet, and there is one, don't make them roll, but let them find it automatically.

Ok, now you are ready to go on!

Rolling Dice

In *Scheherazade*, as a rule of thumb, only players roll dice against a Difficulty Level set by the Storyteller, unless you decide to use the Active Rolling rule, or there is a player vs player conflict (see sidebar at page 58").

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Action Resolution

When a player declares an action with an uncertain outcome, the Storyteller *sets a Difficulty Level* (or simply Level or LvL) from 1 (Very Easy) to 10 (Nigh Impossible), and chooses *two Attributes for the player to roll on*, depending on how the player described their Action. You can use the Difficulty Table as a reference for setting the level, and the Example Actions Table for deciding what Attributes to use.

Then, the player rolls a *number of dice equal to the two Attributes' values and the character's Concept value* (if relevant) added together.

Every 4 or more on a die is a Success, every 3 or less is a Failure.

If the player scores at *least a number of Successes equal to the Difficulty Level, the action is successful!* Extra successes mean greater positive results (margin of success). If the player rolls less successes than the Difficulty Level, he fails, and may suffer consequences depending on how many successes he is short by (margin of failure).

Fate Die. One of the dice rolled must be a different size or color than the others. This is the Fate Die. It works exactly as the other dice with two important differences.

First, *the value of the Fate Die cannot be changed* in any way by Unique Gifts or other rules.

Second, if the Fate Die's *result is 1, the action has a negative Consequence*, regardless of whether the overall roll is successful or not. On the opposite side, if the *result is a 6, the action has a positive Consequence*, whether the overall roll is successful or not. If the Storyteller can't think of a reasonable consequence given the specific roll or situation, simply add +1 to the Difficulty of the character's next action (negative Consequence), or give -1 to the Difficulty of the character's next action (positive Consequence).

Difficulty Table

LEVEL	DIFFICULTY	EXAMPLE
1	Very Easy	Climb a wall full of handholds with climbing gear
2	Easy	Climb a wall full of handholds without climbing gear
3	Average	Climb a wall with sparse handholds
4	Difficult	Climb a wall with no handholds
5	Challenging	Climb a wall with no handholds while being chased by enemies
6	Intimidating	Climb a wall with no handholds while being chased by enemies, in darkness
7	Formidable	Climb a wall with no handholds while being chased by enemies, in darkness, while carrying a wounded companion
8	Heroic	Climbing a perfectly smooth wall
9	Legendary	Climbing a perfectly smooth wall, using only one arm
10	Nigh Impossible	Climbing a perfectly smooth and impenetrable wall

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Example. Aliyaya the Blue Dervish tries to jump over a crevasse to escape a pack of Fire Jackals. The Storyteller asks her for a POW+COU roll vs a Level 3. Aliyaya has POW 2, COU 4 and her Concept is Dedicated Dervish 1 (which is relevant, since dervishes are skilled in acrobatic fighting). Aliyaya's player rolls 4+2+1=7 dice. She rolls 5,5,6,4,3,2,1 (Fate Die). Four successes, one more than necessary, but she rolled a 1 on the Fate Die! The Storyteller decides that the Blue Dervish not only jumps to the other side of the crevasse, but she also runs away a bit, reaching the entrance of a nearby cavern. And now the Fate Die: landing near the verge of the crevasse Aliyaya breaks away some of the edge, which now makes it more difficult (+1) for her friends behind her to jump over the obstacle.

Improving Your Chances

You may have noticed that the difficulty table is a little unforgiving: in other words, it could happen that a hero has no chance to succeed at an action, if their Attributes are too low. This is on purpose. If you want to succeed in these cases, you must use your brain, not simply rely on rolling the dice.

Tactics and Gear. A good tactic, or using a suitable piece of gear, can improve your chances, lowering the difficulty of an action by 1 or 2 to a minimum of zero (in which case you don't have to roll at all).

Helping. Forfeiting any other action, you can help a friend in a task, granting him one extra die, plus another one if the helper's Concept is relevant to the action. Note that NPCs cannot help a friend, if they collaborate, use the Group Enemies rule (see page 105).

Fail-Forward. Failing an action by one point can mean (Storyteller's call) that you succeed but, with a negative consequence (like rolling a 1 on the Fate Die).

Example. A few heartbeats after Aliyaya made her leap, Abbas the Old Ghul Hunter puffs up to the edge of the crevasse. He has to jump too (and the Difficulty Level is now 4 because of Aliyaya Fate Die roll of 1). The Storyteller calls for a roll of POW+COU, but Abbas has a meager POW 1, COU 2, and his Concept won't help in this situation, so the player only has 3 dice. Too low to succeed at the Difficulty of 4. Abbas's player looks around, finding an old wooden plank abandoned among the rocks. It isn't very solid, but it's enough to lower the Difficulty by one (to Level 3). Abbas rolls: 6,4,2. Two successes, one less than necessary! The Storyteller says that the Ghul Hunter cautiously walks across the plank until halfway over the crevasse, then the plank breaks, and the old man has to jump to the other side. He misses, but clings to the edge! All of this, while the Fire Jackals howl their frustration on the other side of the crevasse…

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EXAMPLE ACTIONS TABLE

IMPORTANT: this table is only a suggestion, let the players' descriptions of their heroes' actions guide you! If you are really in doubt, ask the player what Attribute they feel would be appropriate for the task (but as Storyteller, you always have the final word).

Example Actions Table

TO...	YOU ROLL ON
...attack in melee	POW+COU
...attack with a ranged weapon	PRE+REA
...defend from a melee attack (parrying)	POW+CAU
...defend from a ranged attack (dodging)	PRE+CAU
...intimidate someone	PAS+COU
...persuade someone	REA+POW
...move stealthily	CAU+PAS
...pick a lock	PRE+REA
...heal a wound	PAS+REA
...remember a piece of lore	REA+PRE
...lift a boulder	POW+CAU
...notice a detail	PRE+CAU
...find or follow tracks	PRE+REA
...gather information at the bazaar	PAS+RES
...find a passage on a ship	CAU+RES

Difficulty Zero

Through clever use of Gear and Tactics, the Difficulty of an action can drop to zero. In this case, consider it an automatic success and you don't need to roll.

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Simple and Complex Actions

The rules above help you handle *Simple Actions*, which are *resolved by a single die roll*, and which comprise 90% of the rolls in the game.

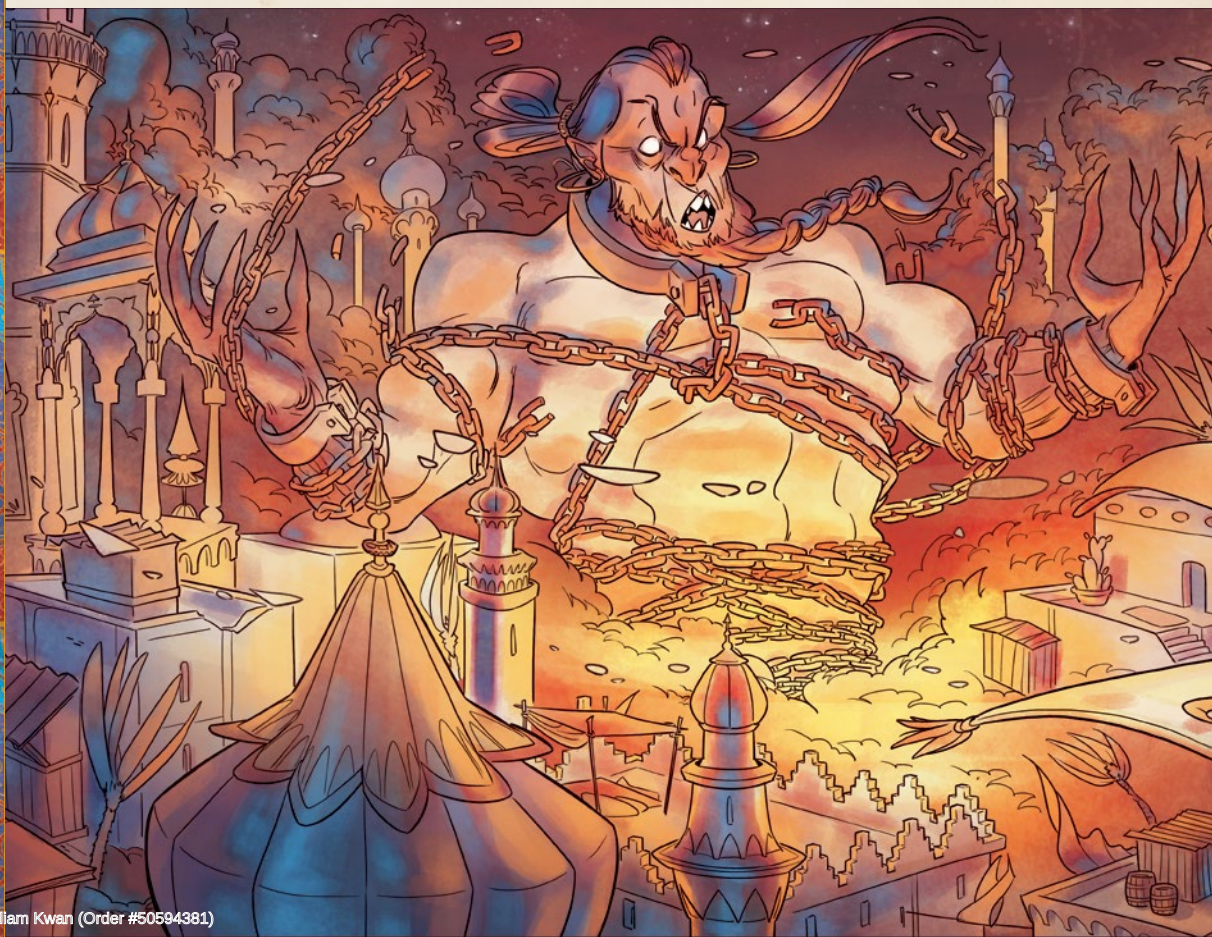
But there is another type of Action, **Complex Actions**, which are lengthy, *complex tasks*, or possibly *simple tasks which must be resolved in a short time* for some reason. Digging a tunnel, picking a lock in a short time, building a raft, these are all Complex Actions.

Complex Actions work a little differently from Simple ones.

First, they are indicated in the book with a notation like this, LvL 4[3], where the first number is the Difficulty (as usual), and the number in brackets is the Complexity. Think of the Complexity as the "hit points" of the Complex Action.

Second, you probably need more rolls to accomplish a Complex Action. Every time you succeed at the action, in fact, you reduce the Complexity by one, plus one per margin of success you achieved. When the Complexity of the action reaches zero, the action is completed. The Storyteller decides how much time each roll takes. If you are picking a lock, each roll may represent a few seconds, while if you are building a raft, each roll can represent several hours or even a day of hard work.

Third, depending on the Action, several heroes can roll for the same action, each



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of them reducing the Complexity of the task with their successes.

All the rules (Fate Die, Helping, and so on) related to Simple actions apply to Complex Actions as well.

Tokens. If you want, you can use gaming tokens to visually show the players the progress of their action.

Example. Aliyaya and Abbas during the exploration of an ancient temple, triggered a trap. The door closes with a crash, and water starts pouring in from the ceiling. The two heroes must open it as soon as they can (the Storyteller secretly knows that after three rounds the room will be flooded and they will die). Bashing the door open is a (LvL 3[4], POW+COU) Action. Both Aliyaya and Abbas can roll, summing up their successes.

First round: Aliyaya rolls three successes, the exact number she needs, reducing the Complexity from 4 to 3. Abbas instead rolls a single success, which isn't enough.

Second round: Aliyaya rolls four successes. She succeeds, with a margin of success of 1. She reduces the Complexity by two, from 3 to 1. Abbas rolls, but fails again.

Third round: Aliyaya rolls only two successes, not enough to influence the action in any way, but Abbas rolls three successes, reducing the action Complexity to zero.

With a mighty push, the temple's door opens, washing the two exhausted heroes out, just in time!

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Active Rolling

If the situation is particularly dramatic, the Storyteller can decide, in place of making the player roll against a fixed Difficulty, to make them roll against a random one. To do so, they simply roll a number of dice (including a Fate Die) equal to two times the normal Difficulty, and the total number of successes becomes the actual Difficulty level for the players to beat.

Level vs Level and Character vs Character Conflict Resolution

Level versus Level. The same rule as above can be used to determine the outcome of two NPCs competing against each other. Roll two dice per Level of the characters, and the one with the highest number of successes wins.

Player versus Player. The same rule can be used to determine the result of two heroes pitted against each other. The players declare their intentions, and the Storyteller decides if one of them is the attacker and the other the defender, or if they are in an equal situation. Then the players roll (they can roll on different Attributes). If there is a clear distinction between attacker and defender, the attacker must roll a number success higher than the defender to win (otherwise, the defender wins). If they are in an equal situation, the character with the highest number of successes wins, and in case of a draw, the action has no winner. Normal rules for margin of success apply.

Example. Aliyaya and Abbas are both trying to grab a lamp from an old altar in a forgotten temple in the sands. It is an opposed roll of PRE+COU for both of them. They roll 3 successes each: draw! They struggle over the lamp, but nobody manages to take it!

Combat

Sooner or later, the heroes will get involved in combat, a deadly situation to be solved with strength of arms, and with cunning and guile, of course!

Setting the Scene

Before any dice are rolled, the Storyteller must describe as clearly as they can the scene, or at least what the heroes can see of it. The battlefield in *Scheherazade* is roughly divided in Zones, each of them representing a particular portion of the area. You don't need to be overly detailed, you can say something like: "the entrance to the room", "the center, where the table is", and "the back of the room, with the strongbox and the small window". To use Zones effectively in combat, we suggest having at least 3-5 of them.

After describing each Zone, the Storyteller must indicate where the heroes and their opponents are.

Zones in Combat. The items and props described in a Zone aren't only decorations: the heroes and their enemies could, and should, use them. Barrels must be overturned, chandeliers swung from, mugs of wine thrown in the face of enemies, and so on. In the Storyteller chapter, you'll find some hints on how to use effectively Zones in combat.

Sketch. If the battlefield is complex, a simple sketch can be really useful to help the players visualize the scene, as can some tokens or miniatures to represent the positions of the various opponents.

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Actions and Initiative

During a round, a character can always make a *Movement, and choose one among: another Move, an Attack, or Doing Something.*

In addition, a character can perform *any number of Defenses* that they need to.

But first, you must decide in what order the combatants act, by rolling for Initiative.

Initiative. At the beginning of the combat, the Storyteller asks for a CAU+COU Test of the LvL of the opponents. Characters passing the test act before the opponents (in any order the players decide), characters failing it act after the enemies. In case of mixed level opponents, the Storyteller can declare multiple Difficulties and place the heroes accordingly. When all the heroes and the opponents have acted, the round ends and a new one begins, following the same order.

The Initiative order remains the same for the whole combat, unless some external event occurs to change it.

Note that in certain cases, Initiative can be skipped, such as if a party has Surprise (see below).

Example of normal Initiative. Aliyaya and Abbas are ambushed by a band of thugs (LvL 2). Aliyaya succeeds at the Initiative roll, while Abbas fails. The initiative order is: Aliyaya, the thugs, Abbas.

Example of multiple Initiative. Aliyaya and Abbas are attacked by a band of thugs (LvL 2) lead by an evil sorcerer (LvL 4). Aliyaya scores one successes, missing both difficulties, while Abbas scores three successes, passing the thug's difficult but not the sorcerer's Difficulty. The initiative order is: sorcerer, Abbas, thugs, Aliyaya.

Surprise

Sometimes, one character (or a side) ambushes the other, in which case they get surprise, which can be Full or Partial (Storyteller's choice).

Full Surprise. The surprising side gets a free round, during which the surprised side cannot act (but can defend).

Partial Surprise. The surprising side automatically wins the Initiative.

Assessing Surprise. Don't roll for this, use common sense: if the heroes hide somewhere and ambush their enemies, they have surprise. If the heroes advance boldly down a corridor where enemies are hidden, they should be surprised.

Movement

Scheherazade uses "theater of mind" style combat. As mentioned above, the battlefield is divided into Zones. A *character can freely move 1 Zone during their turn* (before or after making an action). If they want, they can spend an action to make a second Movement.

Difficult Zone. If a Zone is particularly awkward to cross (for example, there is a wall to climb, a fire to avoid, or so on), the hero can be asked to make a Lvl 2 (PRE+CAU) roll to pass through it. If they fail, they cannot cross the zone, and the movement is considered spent.

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Leaving Combat. If a hero is engaged in melee and wants to leave the Zone (not to move across the same Zone, which is allowed), they suffer a free attack from every opponent engaging them.

Attack

Characters can normally attack only opponents in the same Zone with melee weapons, while they can attack enemies in other Zones with ranged attacks

To attack an enemy, the character must pass a Test (usually POW+COU for melee, or PRE+REA for ranged).

The test is made at the LvL of the defender.

If the test is successful, they can spend one Effect, plus another one per margin of success, as follows. The same Effect can be selected multiple times.

- **Damage.** Spend one Effect to cause one point of damage to the opponent, lowering his Life by one.
- **Hinder.** Spend one Effect to give the opponent -1 to his LvL until his next round (a suitable description is necessary). Enemies reduced to LvL 0 cannot act (consider them stunned).

Example. Aliyaya, much to her dismay, sees one Fire Jackal jump over the crevasse, right near poor Abbas, who is hanging from it. Without even thinking, she charges the foul beast [LvL 3] swinging her sword! She rolls 4 successes, which qualifies for two Effects. She decides to spend the first one to deal one damage to the Jackal, and the second one to push it back, hindering it (and reducing it to LvL 2). In this case, the Storyteller, considering that the beast is on the edge of the crevasse, decides that it falls down screaming.

Defend

Characters attacked by enemies must defend to avoid being hit.

This is done by making a test (usually POW+CAU to defend from a melee attack, or PRE+CAU to defend from a ranged attack). *A hero can defend as many times as necessary without penalty.*

The test is made at the LvL of the attack.

If the defender fails, the Storyteller can spend one Effect against the character, and they suffer one Effect per margin of failure, as described below. The same Effect can be selected multiple times.

- **Damage.** Spend one Effect to cause one point of damage to the hero, lowering his Life by one.
- **Hinder.** Spend one Effect to increase by +1 the Difficulty of the hero's actions until their next round (a suitable description is necessary).

On the other side, if a hero defends very well, they obtain one Effect point per margin of success, which they can spend as it follows. The same Effect can be selected multiple times.

- Spend two Effects to Hinder an enemy (as shown under Attack above).
- Spend three Effects to perform an immediate free attack, action, or movement (only once per round).

Example. The first Fire Jackal is already howling in terror when a second one jumps over the crevasse, attacking the Blue Dervish. Aliyaya must defend [LvL 3], but she only rolls 2 successes, failing by one.

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The Storyteller decides to spend one Effect dealing her one point of damage. The mandibles of the monster close on the young girl's arm, leaving a red line of blood on it. But it doesn't end there: a second Fire Jackals attacks Aliyaya, who this time rolls 6 successes, gaining 3 points of Effect! Aliyaya's players decides to use them to immediately make an attack: she is successful, dealing three damage and actually killing the second attacker!

Do Something

Under this catch-all category, we include all the other activities which can take place during combat which are not attacking or moving. For example, casting a spell, helping a friend, opening a door, quaffing a potion, or whatever. For very long actions (such as deciphering an ancient scroll), the Storyteller can say that the activity requires more Actions to be done (which the character must spend over multiple turns).

Gear

Items which have Keywords can give substantial bonuses to your actions in combat. Certain Keywords are triggered when a "6" is scored on dice when used actively by the players. The same Keywords, if used by the enemies, trigger when the players roll "1" on the Fate Die.

Damage and Recovery

Heroes and opponents alike can get hurt. This can happen in combat, from falling down from a high place, ingesting a poison, and in a number of other ways.
Per each point of damage suffered, a character reduces their Life by one (even if some attacks can damage their Energy too).

Defeated. When the Life of a hero drops to zero, the character is Defeated, a special status meaning basically that the character falls down and cannot do anything until Recovery (see below). If the group is playing with the Injuries rules (see page 63), it may even mean that the character is dead, otherwise, unless someone finishes the character off, they will awaken one to six hours later (roll one die). What happened in the meantime is left to the Storyteller: the hero could have been left for dead and abandoned, captured by their enemies, or simply been taken care of by their friends.

Why Hindering?

The power players among you (yeah, I know you are here), may question why one would ever waste an Effect point in an attack on Hindering someone instead of dealing a damage point? There are at least two reasons. First, a hindered enemy will be easier for you to defend from. Second, a hindered enemy will be easier for your friends to attack, if they came after you in the turn.

Remember: teamwork can save your day in difficult fight.

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Special Combat Situations

Scheherazade is quite abstract in its handling of combat. The system prefers to give you some basic rules, and let you make the rulings during the game. To help you, in this sidebar you'll find some of the most frequent cases which have come up at our table, and our chosen solution.

Unarmed Combat. If two opponents are fighting unarmed, there is no problem. If a character is unarmed versus an armed opponent, he suffers +2 to the Difficulty, both of defending and attacking.

Two Weapons Combat. A staple of many fantasy swashbucklers, a character wielding two weapons receives −1 Difficulty when fighting against an opponent with one weapon only and no shield. In addition, he can decide to trigger the Keywords of all the weapons he has (if the Keywords require a 6, he must spend two sixes to trigger them). If you want something more powerful, you must buy a Unique Gift.

Distracting, Taunting, and Dirty Tricks. Often, in movies and comics, combats aren't only savage slashes of blades, but also tricks, like pulling the carpet out from under the guard's feet, unnerving them with a steely gaze, and so on. All these things are possible in Scheherazade. Consider them normal "attacks" which cannot cause damage, but only Hinder the enemy. Feel free to experiment!

Recovery

After a scene, when the situation settles down, the heroes can decide to Rest. The characters must be in a calm situation, be able to eat and drink something, and then sleep or relax for a night. The exact number of hours is left to the Storyteller, but in general, only a single Rest is allowed per day. After doing so, they recover all their Energies. If a healer is present, they can also try curing an Injury for a friend (see next page).

During a Rest, the group can also decide to Tell a Story (see Moon Points below).

Tending Wounds. While the heroes are in the thick of the action, they cannot afford the luxury of a Rest, but they can try to tend their wounds, if they suffered some. It is a (Lvl 1, PAS+REA) Action, which allows a hero to recover one Life point plus the margin of success. A skilled healer can roll for the whole group if they want, receiving Help from a Friend. Tending wounds requires ten minutes of time per patient.

Meditating. A character taxed by the use of spells, or simply worn down from events, can try to recover their composure by meditating. It is a (LvL 1, PAS+REA) Action, which allows the hero to recover one Energy point plus the margin of success. A single attempt can be made each day, and requires ten minutes of time.

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Optional Rule: Injuries

In a typical *Scheherazade* game, a Defeated hero is simply out of the game until the end of the scene, or when he or she recovers. If you want a grittier game, you can use the following rule.

When a player character suffers damage which would bring them below zero Life, they are Defeated, their Life is then set to zero, and they must check whether they have suffered an Injury.

Roll a normal die and a Fate Die. If they score the same number, the character is dead. If they are different, the hero is Injured.

Injury. If they are different, the first die's result tells you what Attribute, in order on the Character Sheet, is Injured. Draw a circle around the highest, un-circled full box of that Attribute. Until the Injury is healed, the Attribute suffers -1 per circled box. The player should find a suitable description: for example, an Injury to Power could be a smashed bone, while a Reason Injury could be a severe concussion, and so on.

Recovering from an Injury. The Fate Die tells you the severity of the Injury, in game terms, the Difficulty of the PAS+REA roll to heal it, with one sole exception: if the Fate Die result is 6, the Injury is permanent, and the character must cancel all the marks in the circled box (and must cancel the circle too) actually reducing the Attribute by one.

Moon Points

The heroes of *Scheherazade* have a particular connection with the moon. In some way, they have been chosen by it to be its agents in the world. This special connection is handled through Moon Points.

Every hero begins the game with 1 Moon Point, and can gain up to four, each of them representing a quarter of the moon, up to the full moon.

Using Moon Points

How can Moon Points be used? Basically, in two ways.

Rerolling Dice. A player can spend a Moon Point to reroll one or more dice of their choice if they don't like the result. They can be part of an Action roll or any other roll regarding the hero, like the Injury roll or a random roll to check who falls into a trap.

Create a Story element. The character can spend a Moon Point to influence in some way the story. For example, they can invent a connection on the fly, like an old hakim friend who happens to know a lot about the Magian religion, or a minor event, like a herd of goats passing in the bazaar, blocking their pursuers during a chase. The Storyteller can veto the expense of the point, but, if it is allowed, it must have a real influence on the story.

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Gaining Moon Points

There are various ways of receiving Moon Points. First, they are gained in-game for outstanding actions such as (but not only):

- Saving a friend's life at risk of your own
- Being really heroic
- Finding an outstanding solution for a problem
- Telling a Story (see below)

Telling a Story

Sherazade is a master story teller, and stories are a key element of this game. So, it should be no surprise that the heroes, in game, have the chance to tell stories.

When does it Happen? During a Rest, or between sessions, the players, one at a time, have a chance to Tell a Story. In published scenarios, you'll know it is "a moment for a story" because you will find a small fire icon like this one in the text. Players can also Tell a Story between sessions, or at the end of it. If you and your players chat via email between sessions (as many groups do), the Narrator (see below) can use that opportunity to tell their story.

Who tells the Story? In turn, each player has the chance to Tell a Story. It can happen on a voluntary basis, randomly, or following a pre-selected order. When the

Optional Rule: Using Stories to Insert a Story Element in the Scenario

A story told by a player can be a simple way to gain a Moon Point, or can also be used, if the Storyteller approves it, to actually add a Story Element, which means saying that something in the story told is true and becomes part of the gaming world, affecting it.

Example. The heroes are dying of thirst on a hopeless journey through the desert, after having lost their water supplies in a hasty escape from the Vizier's minions. One night, huddled together to resist the desert's cold, one of the heroes tells the Story of the Blue Oasis, a lost place which seems to appear in different locations, which is fabled to have saved thirsty travelers from death, and decides to insert the Oasis as a Story Element. The Storyteller accepts the intrusion and, then next day, the party sees, in the distance, the Blue Oasis... which could be as the hero narrated, or maybe a little different.

In Scheherazade, as you see, stories have power.

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hero tells a story, mark the "Narrator box" in the center of the moon symbol of the character sheet (look at the sidebar on the right). This means that they have already told a story, and cannot tell another one until all the players have taken on the Narrator role. When all the players have told a story, they erase the Narrator box.

How does it work? The story a player tells is of their own creation. Basically, it should be a story in the style of the One Thousand and One Nights, told from the character's perspective. Some suggestions:

- A fable or a parable
- A tale from the hero's past
- A tale of one of his companions
- A tale of how the hero got involved with Scheherazade

Note that a story doesn't have to be original (oral cultures are based on re-telling the same story). A story doesn't have to be true. The other players can contribute, in-game, to the story, asking questions, intervening, and so on, but without stealing the focus from the Narrator.
If you are telling stories at the table and not outside the session, we suggest that you keep the length of the story short, between 5 and 10 minutes.

What does it grant? The Narrator, at the end of the tale, receives a Moon Point (and marks the Narrator box on the character sheet), or can insert a Story Element into the Scenario. They can also give a Moon Point to another player of choice who interacted with them.

Narrator Box

Optional Rule: Stories as Social Situation Solvers

Stories, actually told by players, can also be great elements of role play, for example in certain social situations.

- A monster could accept a story as payment to spare your life.
- A lord could be amused from your story and help you in exchange.
- A story could be an element of a incantation.

The Golden Rule of Telling Stories

Telling a story is an art, and not everybody is good at it. Nobody, even your friends at the table, expect you to be a master Narrator. So, relax, tell the story as best you can, and enjoy it.
A suggestion: it is perfectly fine to think up a story before the game starts and keep it ready for when it is needed

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Character Advancement

One of the most exciting things in role playing games is the fact that your hero grows and becomes more powerful and skilled.

In *Scheherazade*, the players receive an amount of experience, which they can use to buy Marks, which can be spent on improving attributes and their Unique Gift.

But this is only half of the advancement of the hero: a good part of it, in fact, comes from the spells, skills, and wondrous items and allies that the character can discover while exploring the game world (which are detailed in the Game Master part of the book).

Gaining Experience

Session. At the end of each session, the Storyteller awards Experience Points (XP). In general, a player is awarded one Experience Point for each of the following:

- Joining the gaming session
- Having a good idea in game (can happen multiple times)
- Good role-playing

Scenario. At the end of the scenario, in addition, the Storyteller will award 1-5 XP, depending upon the complexity of the adventure and how many goals the characters achieved.

Moon Points. Last but not least, every time a player spends a Moon Point, they gain 1 XP.

Spending Experience

Experience is spent to buy Marks, which can be used exactly like during character creation, to improve the hero's Attributes, including Resources. In addition, Marks can be used to improve your Unique Gift (not to buy a new one: this must be found during the adventures).

The exact cost of each Mark depends on the pace of advancement decided by the Storyteller at the beginning of the campaign, as shown in the table below.

Recalculate Energy and Life. If you spend Marks and you complete a special box (a heart, a star, or a circle) remember to recalculate your Secondary Attributes.

Advancement Pace Table

Advancement Pace	Experience cost to buy a Mark
Fast	5
Medium *(suggested as default)*	10
Slow	15

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Treasure Points and Improving Resources

Treasure Points. During the course of the game, your heroes may find enormous treasure troves, or be rewarded by a wealthy sheikh or merchant. Since currency is treated in the abstract in this game, this wealth is handled via Treasure Points, which are simply a very specialized form of Experience points, which can only be spent to place Marks in resources (or "burned" to buy a very costly item).

Raising Resources. When you raise you Resources, at the beginning of the next adventure, you can spend the new point of Resources to add a Keyword Point to your Gear.

Improving Unique Gifts

Your Unique Gifts can be improved by spending Marks in this way: do you you remember that you wrote on the character sheet 1x1 near your hero's first Unique Gift? The first number is the *Scope of the Gift*, how *large his field of application is*, while the second one is its *Rank, how powerful the associated mechanic is*.

You can improve both the Scope and the Rank of the Unique Gift, but the cost of the Gift, in Marks, is the multiplication of the two values.

The maximum values of a Unique Gift is 3x3.

Example. Aliyaya wants to improve the Scope of the Sword of the Almighty Gift by one. She erases the [1x1] on the sheet and replaces it with [2x1]. This means the total cost of Marks is 2x1=2 Marks. Then, after a while, she decides to improve the Rank of his Gift by one, replacing the 2x1 with 2x2. To do so, she must spend 4 Marks.

Improving the Scope of a Gift

This simply means widening the Scope, the conditions under which the Gift functions. For Special Abilities, it may be tricky to define, and the best thing to do is to discuss it with the Storyteller.

Example. Aliyaya's Sword of the Almighty allows her to roll on PAS when armed with a sword and unarmored. This is at Scope 1. At Scope 2, the same mechanic could apply also to athletic tests (like pivoting, jumping, and so on). While at Scope 3, she could decide to add another weapon, or to remove the "unarmored" limitation from the Scope. Obviously this is only my idea, another player could expand the scope of the Gift in another direction.

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Optional Rule: Mixing Unique Gifts

After the players become confident with the Unique Gifts mechanics, nothing prevents them from mixing the various Gifts during their character's growth, for example starting at Rank 1 with a Technique, then adding another Rank of a Knack and so on.
The only limitations are:

- The maximum number of Ranks a Gift can have is 3
- You must take every new type of Gift starting at Rank 1
- All the Gift's mechanics must be in the same Scope

Example. Aliyaya has the Blade of the Almighty Technique, which at Rank 1 allows her to use PAS when fighting with a sword, unarmored. She decides to advance it to Rank 2, taking a rank of Knack.
So now the Gift is:

Blade of the Almighty [2x1]. When Aliyaya fights unarmored with her sword she can roll on PAS, in addition she can reduce one die by one to increase another die by one.

Improving the Rank of a Gift

This means making the gift's mechanic more powerful. Below, you'll find how the various mechanics improve.

1 Technique

At *Rank 1* you choose one non-conventional Attribute to use in a specific task.

At *Rank 2* you choose two non-conventional Attributes to use in a specific task.

At *Rank 3* you choose two non-conventional Attributes to use in a specific task and roll an extra die in that specific task.

2 Knack

At *Rank 1* you can reduce the dice results by one point to give another die +1 in a specific task.

At *Rank 2* you can reduce the dice results by up to 2 points to give the other dice up to +2 (each -1 nets +1) in a specific task.

At *Rank 3* you can reduce one die by one point to give +2 to another die (or +1 to two dice) in a specific task.

3 Training

At *Rank 1* you can decide to not roll in a specific task, but to take half the total dice successes, rounded down.

At *Rank 2* is as above, but with +1 additional success.

At *Rank 3* is as above, but with +2 additional successes or with one additional success as if it scored a "6" (this can be useful to trigger some specific Keywords of your Gear).

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4 Ally/Relic

At *Rank 1* your Ally is LvL 1 or your relic is standard.

At *Rank 2* your Ally is LvL 2 or your relic gets a new power or an improvement of a previous one (discuss with the Storyteller).

At *Rank 3* your Ally is LvL 3 or your relic gets a new power or an improvement of a previous one (discuss with the Storyteller).

5 Effort

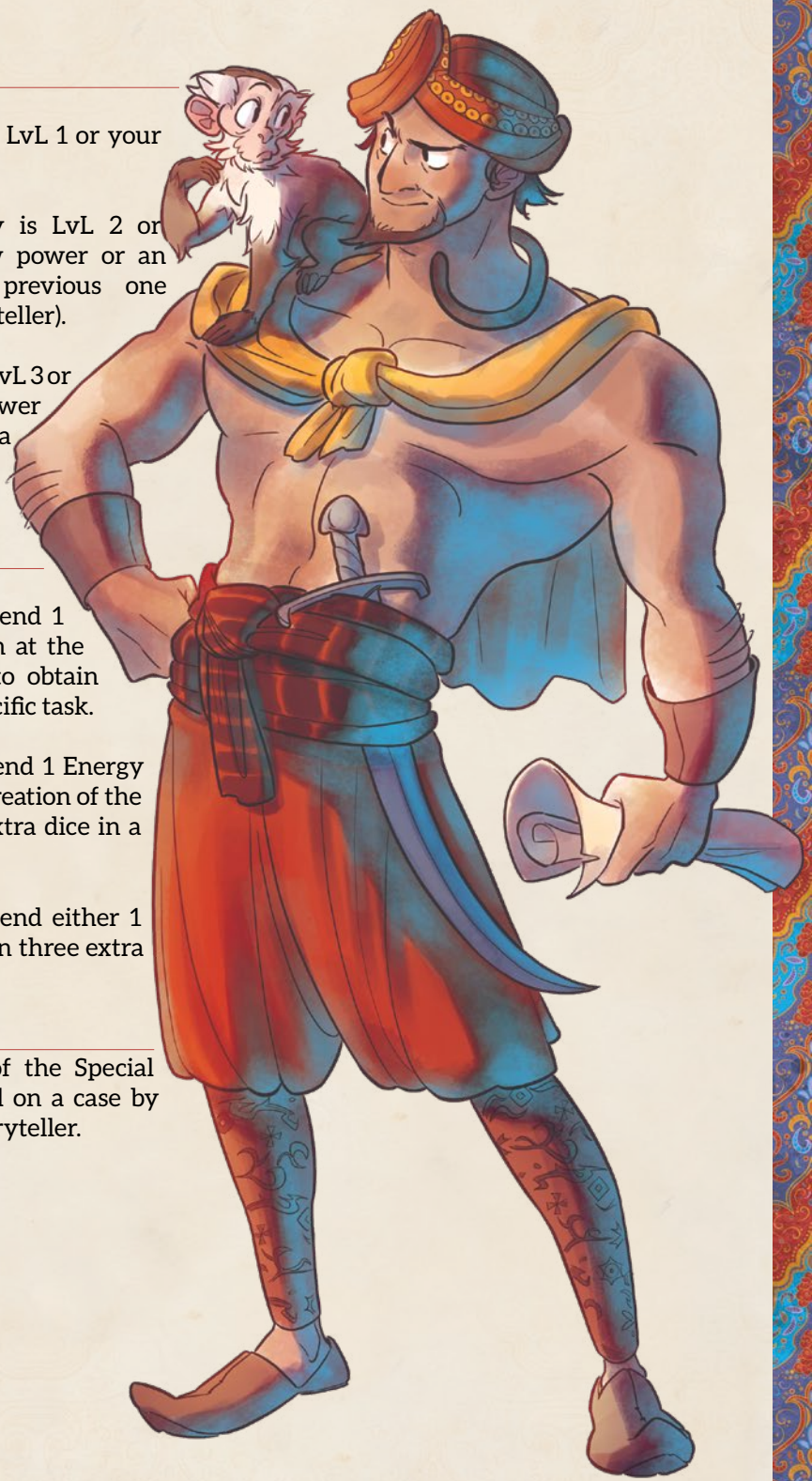
At *Rank 1* you can spend 1 Energy or Life (chosen at the creation of the Gift) to obtain two extra dice in a specific task.

At *Rank 2* you can spend 1 Energy or Life (chosen at the creation of the Gift) to obtain three extra dice in a specific task.

At *Rank 3* you can spend either 1 Energy or Life to obtain three extra dice in a specific task.

6 Special

The Rank variation of the Special Gift must be discussed on a case by case basis with the Storyteller.



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Aliyaya the Blue

William Kwan (Order #30634634)

Scheherazade

THE ONE THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS RPG

Aliyaya the Blue
NAME

Dedicated Dervish
CONCEPT

A holy swordswoman devoted to God
DESCRIPTION

STATUS

ATTRIBUTES

POWER

PRECISION

COURAGE

CAUTION

PASSION

REASON

SECONDARY ATTRIBUTES

4
LIFE

MOON

4
ENERGY

GEAR & NOTES

+ Dervish Sword [Vicious]
+ Blue Dervish Vest
+ Mother's Earrings

UNIQUE GIFT & SPELLS

Blade of the Almighty [1x1] – Technique
Until she is wearing no armor, she always uses PAS when fighting with a sword.

RESOURCES

EXPERIENCE

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Gear

"Being a particularly clever boy, I made the sensible decision to invest the money. I invested it in drink and expensive food and stylish clothes and in buying myself a lot of friends at the local inn."

-Sinbad the Sailor

Buying Items

The Caliphate of the Eternal Moon is an ancient culture, where transactions are made only in part with coins (the dinar): the majority of them happen through barter, exchanging of favors, and so on.

Scheherazade uses an abstract system of currency, so as to not bog you down with accounting for each coin spent. It is very simple: items have a Cost Level (or simply Cost).

If the Cost of an item is less than your Resources score, you can buy it, in reasonable quantities.

If the Cost of an item is equal to your Resources score, you must make a RES roll (only that Attribute, plus the Concept, if it applies) *with a Difficulty equal to the Item's Cost*. If you succeed, you can buy the item, if you fail you can choose to buy it, but if you do, you must circle a Resource point for each point of margin of failure (which doesn't count

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anymore), because you are taxing your finances or the patience of your friends. Lost resources are recovered at the rate of one at the beginning of each scenario. *If the Cost of an Item is greater than your Resources, you cannot buy it.*

Helping with Resources Rolls. You can do it, but only if both of you have an equal level of Resources, otherwise the disparity is simply too high (and it makes sense that only the richer character rolls).

Treasure Points. A way to improve your chances of buying items beyond your resources is spending Treasure Points. You must spend a number of Treasure Points equal to the Cost of an Item to reduce by one the Cost, or you can spend double the Cost to automatically buy it.

Example. Aliyaya needs a mount to travel through the desert. At the grand bazaar of Bagdad she finds an old mule (Cost 0) and an average looking horse (Cost 1) and a strong camel (Cost 2). The young dervish has Resources 1. The camel is beyond her resources, while she could afford the horse, but its cost is equal to her Resources, so she would have to roll on (LvL 1, RES). She fails this roll, meaning she could buy it by reducing her Resources to 0, making her broke and with no money for provisions. She decides to take the old mule, hoping it won't die on the journey...

Example 2. Later, Aliyaya wants to buy a marvelous horse from Samarkand (Cost 2), but her Resources' value is 1. Luckily, she has some agate gems she found in a past adventure (4 Treasure Points). Spending 2, she reduces by 1 the cost of the beast, which should require her to roll (being Cost 1 equal to her Resources value). She rolls, but fails the roll by one, meaning that she can buy it, but this will reduce her to Resources 0 (very poor). She decides to change tactics, and spends the

Do I really need a weapon?

The short answer is "no".

The long one is that, despite the fact that in many fantasy games the heroes will cut through hordes of enemies, in a Scheherazade adventure it may or may not be true. After all, what sense is there in having a princess or a fakir run around with a sword?

Not much. A character without a weapon opens up new, interesting ways to solve problems: the heroes can persuade, threaten, seduce, or, if things go really south, escape! And don't forget that, if a fight erupts, you can always be useful Helping your mates, or doing interesting things with the environment.

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double the Cost (4 Treasure Points) to buy the horse outright. Now the Blue Dervish has a fabulous mount!

Gear Keywords

Gear is an important part of a *Scheherazade* character. The right tool at the right moment can give you the edge to pass a difficult Test. On the other hand, we don't want gear to be overly detailed: after all, a sword is a sword, and we are interested in detailing it rule-wise only when it is a *particular* sword, which is notably sharp, wicked, or so on...

The game implements the effect of items through a system of keywords called Keywords, some positive and others negative, each of them with a Keyword Points (KP) cost. The higher the KP of an object, the more powerful it is. As a rule of thumb, a character begins the game with three normal items, then they can spend Keyword Points to improve one or more of them, spending a total of Keyword Points equal to their Resources level.

Creating New Items. In this chapter, you'll find a list of items, but it isn't exhaustive: you can create the gear you need (or tweak an item) by simply combining Keywords and summing up KP, using the existing items as guidelines.

Calculating Cost. As a base, the Cost of an item is equal to the sum of its Keyword Points, plus a discretionary difference that the Storyteller can add or subtract, if the item is particularly rare or highly-sought.

Example. Aliyaya has Resources 1. She begins with three normal items, and has 1 KP to spend. She decides that her dervish sword (a one-handed melee weapon) is particularly sharp, so she gives it the Vicious Quality.

Encumbrance

Encumbrance isn't a focus of *Scheherazade*, and it is handled through the Heavy Keyword.

Item List

NAME	COST	KEYWORDS
WEAPONS		
Improvised weapon (club, stone, etc...)	0	Frail
Small weapon (dagger, cestus)	0	Small
One handed melee weapon (scimitar, axe, mace)	0	
Two handed melee weapon (two handed sword or axe)	0	Dangerous, Two Hands
Polearm (spear, halberd or quarterstaff)	0	Reach, Two Hands
Bow	0	Ranged, Two Hands
Sling	0	Ranged, Small

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ARMOR		
Light Armor (leather, furs)	1	Protection 1
Medium Armor (chain)	2	Protection 2
Heavy Armor (janissary armor)	3	Protection 3, Heavy
Shield	1	Defense, Heavy
MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS		
Book of Lore (specific topic)	1	Tool to discover knowledge on a specific topic
Elegant Robes	2	Tool for persuasion and commanding
Healer's Bag	1	Tool for healing wounds
Healing Salve	1	Recover 2 Life
Lamp	0	Light source
Lock Picks	1	Tool to pry locks open
Provisions	0	Enough food for a week, Heavy
Rope	0	Tool to climb, Heavy
MOUNTS AND VEHICLES		
Camel or Dromedary	2	Useful to ride in the desert
Elephant	4	A mighty mount for a mighty lord
Horse	1-3	The best ones come from far away Samarkand. Higher cost horse act as a Tool of speed or endurance (or both)
Small Fishing Boat	1	Easily carries a small group of travelers, can navigate shallow waters.
Small Merchant Ship	3	Can carry a dozen people, manned by a crew of three
Large Merchant Ship	4	Can carry two dozen people, manned by a crew of eight
Warship	5	A large ship with 50 or more soldiers
SERVICES		
Cheap lodging in an inn or caravanserai	1	A mattress in the common room, tea, dates, and hard bread
Sumptuous lodging	2-4	Depending on the level: a banquet, a luxury bed chamber, and entertainers.
Hakim's Services	1-4	The cost is the LvL of the hakim. He can cure wounds (including injuries), or research lore (specific to his field)
Odalisque Services	1-4	If you want to see the fabled Seven Veils dance, or something more...
Passage on a ship	0-3	Gratis if working in the crew, otherwise, 1 per week of travel, 2 per a month, 3 for three months or more
Place in a caravan	0-3	Gratis if working in the caravan, otherwise 1 per week of travel, 2 per two weeks, 3 for a month or more

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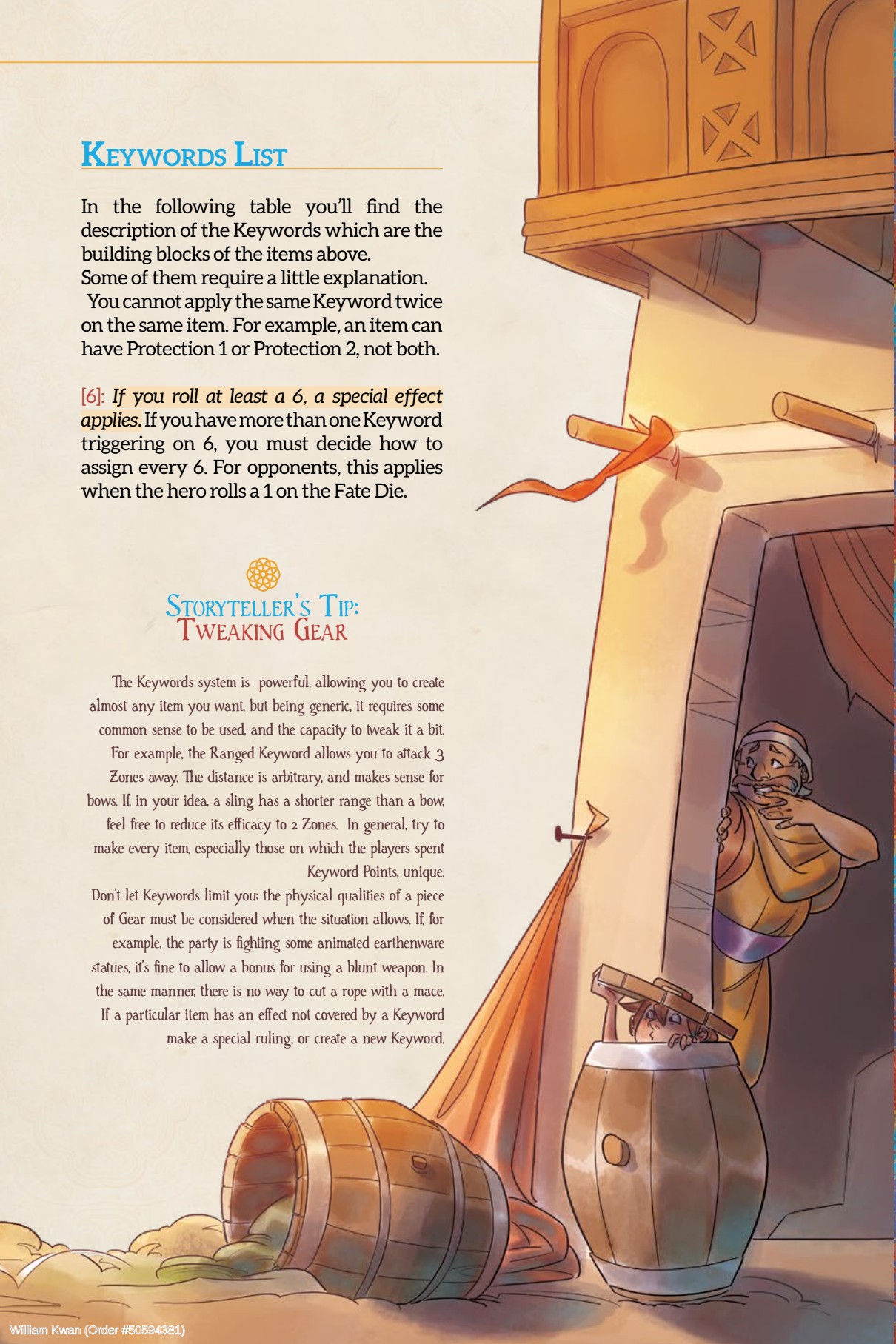
Keywords List

In the following table you'll find the description of the Keywords which are the building blocks of the items above.
Some of them require a little explanation.
You cannot apply the same Keyword twice on the same item. For example, an item can have Protection 1 or Protection 2, not both.

[6]: *If you roll at least a 6, a special effect applies.* If you have more than one Keyword triggering on 6, you must decide how to assign every 6. For opponents, this applies when the hero rolls a 1 on the Fate Die.

Storyteller's Tip: Tweaking Gear

The Keywords system is powerful, allowing you to create almost any item you want, but being generic, it requires some common sense to be used, and the capacity to tweak it a bit. For example, the Ranged Keyword allows you to attack 3 Zones away. The distance is arbitrary, and makes sense for bows. If, in your idea, a sling has a shorter range than a bow, feel free to reduce its efficacy to 2 Zones. In general, try to make every item, especially those on which the players spent Keyword Points, unique.
Don't let Keywords limit you: the physical qualities of a piece of Gear must be considered when the situation allows. If, for example, the party is fighting some animated earthenware statues, it's fine to allow a bonus for using a blunt weapon. In the same manner, there is no way to cut a rope with a mace. If a particular item has an effect not covered by a Keyword make a special ruling, or create a new Keyword.



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Keyword effect Table

TYPE	KP	KEYWORD EFFECT
GENERAL KEYWORDS		
Frail	-1	A frail item breaks after the action, if the Fate Die result is 1. This is in addition to the normal consequences of the Fate Die. Doesn't apply to consumable Items.
Example. A makeshift club is frail and breaks whenever a 1 is rolled on the Fate Die.		
Heavy	-1	You can carry up to a number of Heavy Items equal to your POW Attribute. At Storyteller's discretion, this can raise the Difficulty of or make it actually impossible to carry out certain physical tasks.
Example. A suit of metal armor is Heavy. It causes +1 to the Difficulty of physical tasks except combat, and renders it impossible to swim.		
One-Use	x0.5	This item can be used only once per session (cannot be combined with Recover).
Example. A vial of acid (useful to melt locks) can be used only once.		
Recover	1 per 3 points recovered	A consumable item, which allows you to recover 3 points of Life or Energy, then it is depleted.
Example. A batch of healing herbs lets you recover 3 Life when used.		
Tool	1	A tool is a specific item for a specific task (not combat). It gives -1 to the Difficulty of the task, plus another -1 if at least one 6 is rolled.
Example. A lock pick lowers by 1 the Difficulty of picking locks, lowering the Difficulty by -2 if at least a 6 is rolled.		
WEAPON KEYWORDS		
Dangerous	1	6: +1 damage
Example. A dangerous dagger deals +1 damage if the user rolls a 6		
Entangling	1	This weapon deals +1 Hinder if it successfully hits the victim.
Example. A whip is an entangling weapon		
Lethal	1	The weapon deals +1 damage against a particular enemy or under a particular condition.
Example. A thrice blessed sword deals +1 damage against undead.		
Ranged X	1	You can attack enemies up to 3 Zones away.
Example. A bow can hit enemies 3 Zones away.		
Reach	1	This weapon grants -1 Difficulty when used against Group Enemies and when in Open Zones (ask the GM). The effects stack and apply both in attack and defense.
Example. A polearm reduces by -1 the Difficulty of a combat, both in attack and defense, when used in an outnumbered situation, and grants another -1 if the user has enough space to maneuver it.		

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TYPE	KP	KEYWORD EFFECT
Small	-1	**Melee weapons:** +1 Difficulty against enemies armed with larger weapons, but -1 Difficulty in Narrow Zones (ask the GM). **Ranged weapons:** +1 Difficulty against enemies farther than 2 Zones away. Small weapons can be concealed.
Example. A dagger is a small weapon.		
Two Handed	-1	The weapon requires two hands to be used, preventing the use of a shield.
Example. A bow requires two hands to be used		
Vicious	1	6: the opponent suffers 1 damage at the beginning of their turn due to bleeding or other similar effect until their wounds are tended (LvL 2). Only if the enemy is vulnerable to that effect.
Example. A razor-sharp axe can cause bleeding wounds (1 damage per turn) if the user scores a 6.		
ARMOR KEYWORDS		
Ablative X	1 per point	Absorb X points of damage, then it depletes or breaks and must be recharged or repaired (LvL 2, repairs one point, additional success to repair one additional point).
Example. An amulet of protection (Ablative 2) absorbs magical damage up to 2 points before being recharged with arcane rituals (REA+COU, LvL 2).		
Defense	2	-1 Difficulty in defense rolls.
Example. A small shield can be used to parry and push aside enemies (causing them -1 Difficulty when used defensively).		
Protection 1	1	6: reduce by one the damage suffered.
Example. A suit of leather armor reduces by 1 the damage suffered, if the user rolls at least one 6.		
Protection 2	2	Reduce by one the damage suffered.
Example. A suit of chain mail armor reduces by one any physical damage suffered.		
Protection 3	3	Reduce by one the damage suffered, plus another damage with a 6.
Example. A suit of heavy janissary armor reduces by one any physical damage suffered, plus an additional 1 if you scored a 6.		

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Magic

"Three wishes you have, which I'll fulfill. Choose wisely, mortal!"

-The Genie

Magic is real in the world of *Scheherazade*. It assumes many forms: from the mighty powers of djinn to the subtle incantations of the chirping of birds in the lost forests of the caliphate.

This doesn't mean that magic is commonplace: the majority of people live their entire lives without ever seeing a single act of magic or a supernatural creature.

Gifted. A small number of mortals can perform magic too, they are the Gifted, who perceive the energies flowing everywhere in the world. If you aren't one of them, you cannot use magic, no matter how hard you try.

Spells. Mortals can perform magic in the form of "spells", magical rituals and incantations, in great part created by the ancient followers of Zoroaster, the Magi.

A number of them exist, some quite common and widespread, at least among the wise, while others are fairly rare.

In this chapter you'll learn how to use them.

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Learning Spells

To use a spell a character must first learn it. And, even before that, must find it.

Player characters can begin the game selecting spells from the list of Common Spells, which are those more commonly known and widespread. Per each Mark spent, they learn two Common spells of their choice.

If those spells require components, the character begins with them as additional, free Gear.

After character creation, this option isn't available anymore! Any further spells must be found during adventures: some are hidden in ancient scrolls, others are known by powerful mages, and surely the djinn and other supernatural creatures will have other spells to trade with mortals, but their price might be high...

Learning a spell is usually a long activity, which is done (automatically, no roll is necessary) between adventures.

Casting Spells

Rules-wise, casting a spell is very simple: the player announces they are casting it. The character must be free to speak and move to perform the necessary actions to complete the spell.

Cost: *Using magic is a taxing activity.* The character must spend one Energy point (or more) to cast a spell.

Components. Some spells require special components to be cast, without them you cannot cast the spell. Unless noted in the spell description, components are not destroyed after use.

Duration. Magic is fickle, some enchantments last forever, while other are brief as a heartbeat.

Instantaneous spells have a very brief effect, lasting only the very moment you cast them.

Scene spells last the duration of the current situation: it can be a combat, a chase, a social interaction, and so on.

Permanent spells last forever, until dispelled.

Range. Spells work at different distances.

Personal spells work only on the caster.

Touch spells work after the caster touches the target, in combat this requires a successful melee attack.

Voice and *Sight* spells can be targeted only where the mage's voice can be heard, and where they can see.

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Spell Formulas

You don't need to devise a spell formula, if you don't want to. You can simply tell the Storyteller "I cast a spell".
But if you invent one, a gesture or two, and role-play the spellcasting, the game experience will be more immersive, and the Storyteller could reward you with some minor bonus or additional effect...

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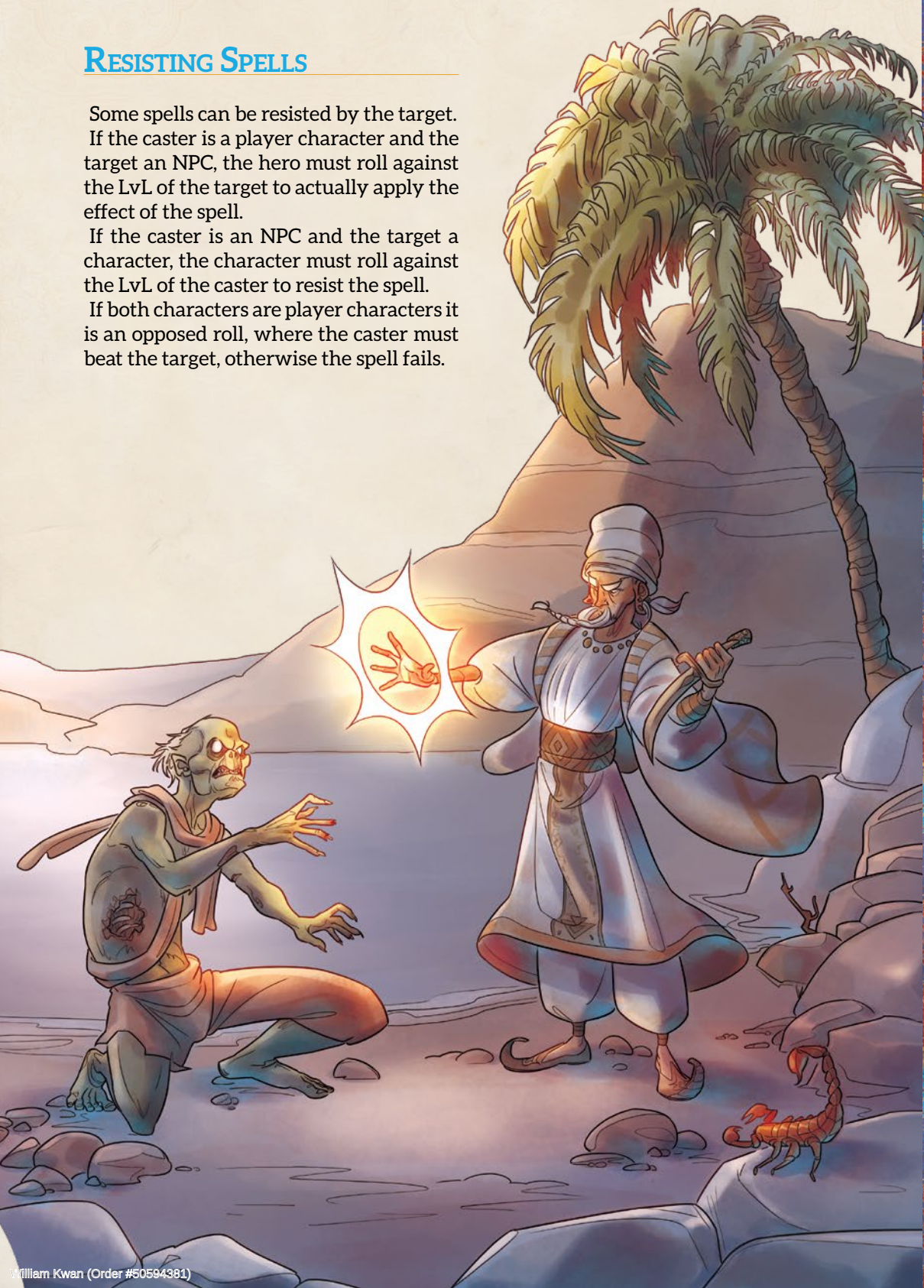
Resisting Spells

Some spells can be resisted by the target. If the caster is a player character and the target an NPC, the hero must roll against the LvL of the target to actually apply the effect of the spell.

If the caster is an NPC and the target a character, the character must roll against the LvL of the caster to resist the spell.

If both characters are player characters it is an opposed roll, where the caster must beat the target, otherwise the spell fails.



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List of Common Spells

ANIMATE OBJECT	
Cost:	1-3 Energy (1=Small, 2=Medium, 3=Large)
Component:	-
Duration:	Scene
Range:	Sight
Effect:	This spell allows the caster to animate an object up to the size of a man. The animated item can even be used to attack, using REA+PRE of the caster and defending using REA+CAU. The Life of the item is equal to the Energy spent. If the animated item is attacked, when reduced to zero Life it reverts to its inanimate state. Animated weapons maintain their qualities. *Small* Items are for anything up to the size of a cat. They have the Small Keyword. *Medium* Items are anything to the size of a dog. *Large* Items are big as a man. -1 Difficulty when attacking. Note: not that an animated item has some basic intelligence (let's say that of a dog), as it is animated by a minor spirit.

ENTHRALL	
Cost:	1 Energy or more
Component:	A gem or a jewel
Duration:	Instantaneous
Range:	Sight
Effect:	The caster of this spell can affect, through hypnotism (with a PAS+REA roll), the mind of another living being, giving them a command ("open that door") which they must obey, or a suggestion which they must believe ("those aren't the slaves you are looking for"). The command cannot be self-damaging, and, if very contrary to the nature of the target (for example, attacking a close friend), the mage must make another roll to force the target to carry out the action. Note that this spell, if used to affect a person, is considered evil. *Charm*. This spell can be used to permanently charm a target, which becomes the faithful servant of the mage. In this case, the cost is equal to the LvL of the victim or their PAS score. The Energy points spent are "frozen", and aren't recovered until the caster drops the spell. In this case, the component required is a honey-locust seed (a particular deciduous plant), which is consumed.

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FIRE MASTERY

Cost:	1-3 Energy
Component:	A source of flame must be present
Duration:	Scene
Range:	Sight
Effect:	One of the oldest forms of Zoroastrian magic is the control of fire. With this spell a caster can control a fire (already present), shaping it as they wants, even using it as a weapon. Note that this spell doesn't actually create a flame, only control it. The effect depends on the size of the flame. *Small.* Torch or equivalent. The mage can use the fire as a flaming sword, to make COU+REA attacks, or to shoot them at Range 1. All the attacks are Vicious. This costs 1 Energy *Medium.* Campfire or equivalent. As Small above, plus the mage can control a tentacle of fire to make COU+REA attacks, with Reach, Vicious, and Attrition 1 keyword (check Storyteller's Guide). This costs 2 Energy. *Large.* Burning building or equivalent. As Medium above, but the magician can attack with three tentacles per round (making separate attacks). This costs 3 Energy. In addition to what was said above, a character casting this spell reduces by one all fire damage he suffers.

Storyteller's Tip: Playing with Fire

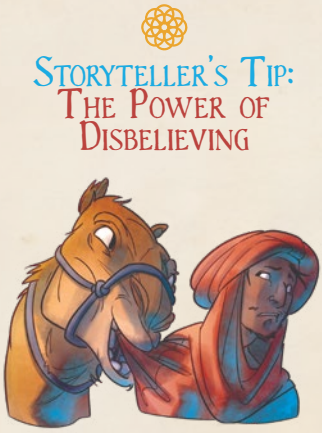
Fire is cool (no pun intended), and a mage with the Fire Mastery spell will probably try to use it every time they can in combat. But fire is dangerous, this must also be remembered. Whenever a Consequence is rolled when wielding fire, something is set afire (to the advantage or disadvantage of the player).

HOLY WORD

Cost:	1 Energy
Component:	- (caster must speak)
Duration:	Instantaneous
Range:	Sight
Effect:	The caster says aloud one of the secrets name of God, which supernatural creatures cannot stand. It is a COU+REA attack, affecting supernatural beings only. Each Effect point caused by this spell deals both Damage and Hinder.

William Kvam (Order #30631434)

ILLUSION	
Cost:	1 Energy per Zone
Component:	-
Duration:	Scene
Range:	Sight
Effect:	Using this spell, the caster can create an illusion affecting the five senses. It can take whatever form the caster wants, static (like a wall) or dynamic (like a charging horseman). The basic size of an illusion is one Zone, but spending more Energy can produce bigger illusions. Illusions are very powerful, but aren't real: an illusionary warrior cannot deal any real damage, and an illusionary fire won't burn anyone in reality, even if the victim thinks so. As a rule of thumb, an illusion attacks at REA+PRE of the caster, and any damage dealt is illusionary, disappearing when the illusion ceases or is disbelieved (see below). A character "killed" by an illusion is only unconscious. An illusion defends at REA+CAU of the caster. The Revelation Spell (see next page) automatically dispels any illusion present. Undead and creatures capable of seeing magic are immune to illusions. *Disbelieving.* Illusions can be defeated by disbelieving them. The target of an illusion can disbelieve it by rolling with REA+CAU (if the target is a player character). The roll is made the first time the victim interacts with the illusion, and any time the illusion does something suspicious (for example, a warrior doesn't die after being stuck with a spear, and so on). A disbelieved illusion disappears.



Storyteller's Tip: The Power of Disbelieving

The Illusion Spell gives you a game mechanic to handle disbelieving illusions, but players can find non-mechanical ways to discover illusions: for example, walking into an illusionary fire, ignoring an illusionary snake, and so on. If they do so, you should allow them to disbelieve the illusion without rolling dice.
Unless the fire they stepped in is real, of course...

William Kwan (Order #5063545)

REVELATION	
Cost:	1 Energy
Component:	-
Duration:	Instantaneous
Range:	Sight
Effect:	Invoking one of the holy names of God has the power of revealing the real aspect of things. When casting this spell, any invisible thing is made visible, any illusion dispelled, and the true aspect of a shape-changed creature revealed. In addition, magical items are surrounded by a glowing halo based on their power (the more intense, the more powerful it is). The color of the halo could also give some hint of their capacities.

SESAME	
Cost:	1 Energy
Component:	- (caster must speak)
Duration:	Permanent
Range:	Sight, any one door, gate, lock, or container
Effect:	With this spell, the caster can magically seal or open a door, gate, lock, or container. The effect is permanent, but the mage must decide a meaningful secret phrase or word (like "open sesame!") to which the door opens, and another one to which it closes (like "close sesame!"). If you don't know the secret phrase, you can only bash down the door (good luck with this!). The same spell can be used to magically open a closed door. Non-magical locks are automatically opened, while doors closed with magic, including this spell, are impervious to this spell.

Storyteller's Tip: The Dangers of Revelation

The Revelation Spell is a powerful one, which can give the heroes very important hints. But it could be a double-edged weapon: if something is concealing his true appearance, for example a powerful efreet, maybe there is a reason, for example its true aspect could make a mortal lose their reason forever...

William Kvam (Order #30631454)

SNAKE CHARM	
Cost:	1 Energy
Component:	Flute or other musical instrument
Duration:	Scene
Range:	Sound of instrument
Effect:	Using this spell, the caster can enslave the will of any snake hearing the sound of his musical instrument, and as long as they continue to play, they can control the snake's actions. For normal ophidians, the spell is automatic, but against giant and magical ones, the caster must pass a REA+PAS Action versus the level of the snake. This spell is very common among fakirs. It exists in other forms, charming other type of animals (fish, birds, and dogs being the commonest ones). This particular form also allows "charming" a rope, with the same effect of the Animate Object spell (it's a Small Item).

William Kvam (Order #30634634)

TRACKING	
Cost:	1 Energy per scene
Component:	Body part (blood, nails etc...) or personal belonging of target
Duration:	Scene, can be prolonged by spending another Energy point
Range:	Personal, blocked by running water
Effect:	The caster, focusing on a personal belonging of the target, can track them down. The caster knows the direction of the target, and, when they are very close, the direction they are in. Remember that a personal belonging ceases to be "personal" depending on how much time it has been separated from the owner. For a bodily part, it is effective until the next dusk or dawn (when magical energies renew), while for an object, it depends on the degree of affection of the owner.

WARD	
Cost:	1 Energy per scene or more (see description)
Component:	Chalk or powder
Duration:	Scene, can be prolonged by spending another Energy point
Range:	Touch or barrier (see below)
Effect:	The caster casting this spell invokes the name of God to put a protection spell upon the target (which can also be themselves). The person protected receives -1 Difficulty to resist powers of supernatural creatures, and reduces by one all damage caused by those sorts of foes. Casting the spell in this way requires no component. *Barrier.* Alternatively, the caster can scribe with chalk, powder, or some other material a barrier or a circle on the ground. As long as the barrier or the circle is whole, anytime a supernatural creature tries to pass across the warding barrier the caster rolls on REA+PAS: if the roll is successful, the creature is repelled and cannot cross the ward. The barrier or circle costs 1 Energy per Zone to be created.

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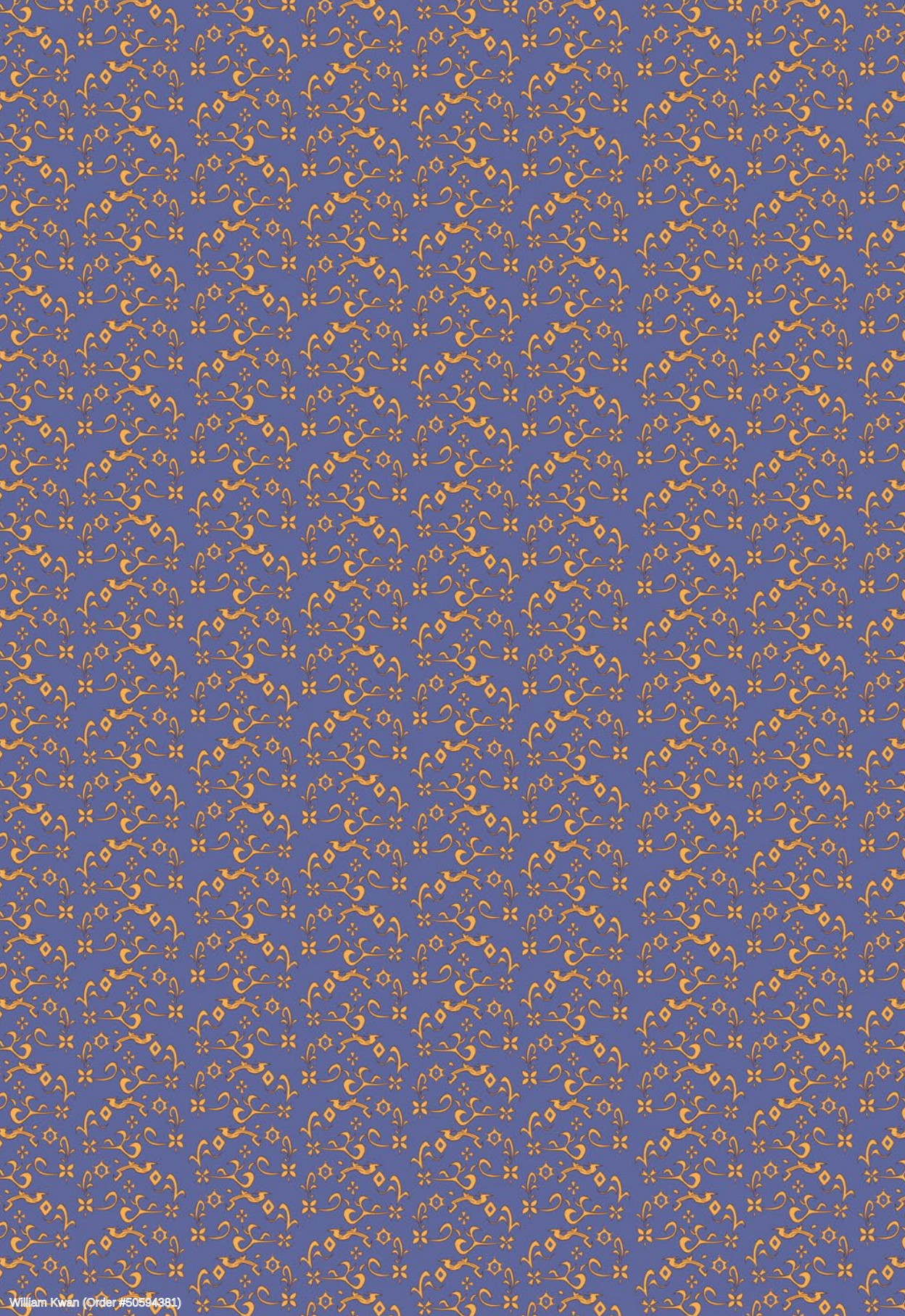
William Kwan (Order #50594381)

Storyteller Guide

William Kwan (Order #50594381)

Running the Game

But it's not the end, it's the beginning of another tale.

-Scheherazade

This chapter gives you, the Storyteller, all the tools necessary to run a *Scheherazade* campaign.

Getting Prepared

Running an RPG is easy and very rewarding, but you need to do some preparation before the campaign starts, plus some other before each session (not much). The more attention you give to the campaign planning part, the better game you'll have later.

Setting the Mood

The Arabian Nights isn't your standard fantasy setting. There are magic, monsters to defeat, and treasures to find obviously, but they aren't the focus of the setting. When you prepare to play *Scheherazade*, you should concentrate on other factors.

Exoticism and Sense of Wonder. The world of *Scheherazade* isn't our own, for a number of reasons. First, it is from the Middle-East, a culture which for us is quite exotic. Names, food, clothes, and locations are very different. At the same time, it should not be gritty and realistic:

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it is a place of fables, where a poor orphan, finding a magic lamp in the morning, can become a prince in the evening. This doesn't mean that those elements must be abused. Heroes won't meet a roc every time they travel the sea, but this could happen, and, in addition, they could hear stories (see below) of the roc. Anything you put in front of the heroes must have an element of wonder. Remember, you have an infinite budget for special effects!

Great Villains and Dramatic Situations. The villains of *Scheherazade* are more than goblins attacking the caravans. They are bad guys of a certain stature: the evil vizier, the powerful magician, and the efreet. Even the bandit's chief in Ali Baba and the Forty Robbers is a devious villain: he has a magic door guarding his hideout, he is a master of disguises, and very clever. These are the types of opponents the heroes should face. In the same manner, the situations you put them into should be similar: protecting the caravan from bandits can be cool in a vanilla fantasy setting, but in this game there is much more to do: evil genies to face, curses to overcome, princesses to save, these are the sort of things real heroes do. This doesn't mean that the players always have to save the world: even saving a village from a ghul or helping a farmer's son to find his lost father can be epic.

Magic. Magic permeates the world of the One Thousands and One Nights: genies, flying carpets, curses and enchantments, they are all part of the setting. When you use magic, and you should, make it really wonderful and unpredictable. The real difference between the people of *Scheherazade*'s world and us, is that for them the supernatural is extraordinary (just as for us), but it is accepted.

Themes of the Arabian Nights:

Below you'll find several words and terms which can help you focus on the right mood.

- Fortune and Virtue versus Power and Wealth
- Princes and Princesses
- Evil Viziers and Dastardly Plots
- Magic Carpets and Enchanted Lamps
- Genies and Wishes
- True Love and Terrible Cruelty
- Treasures of the Sands
- Veiled Women and Dancing Odalisques
- Swashbuckling and Chandelier Swinging
- Ancient Books and Old Tales
- Caravans across the Silent Desert and the Confusion of the Bazaar
- Harems and Eunuchs
- Talking Animals and Magic Plants

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This doesn't mean it is common: the Caliph will be surprised and frightened to discover that a curse has fallen on his beloved one, but he will believe in it.

Stories. Tales and storytelling are powerful in *Scheherazade*.

First, they are the way magic spreads in the setting. Even a minor magical fact, like the presence of a healing fountain somewhere, is magnified by the stories and tales told about it (and which the characters should hear).

Second, tales and stories are the way the players get their info on the world, without resorting to boring info dumps. The World of *Scheherazade* chapter is written in this exact way, with tales (encased one within the other) which give the heroes the basic notions and flavor they need to have to play.

Third, stories are plot devices and "trade money" in this world: creatures and lords are avid collectors of stories, and will often accept being paid (and can pay the heroes) with stories. *Scheherazade* herself paid for her life telling a number of stories to the Caliph, and the heroes themselves are the characters of those stories.

Now you are in the right mood, try to convey it to your players.

Campaign Planning

The first thing to do, when you decide to take the mantle of Storyteller, is decide what type of game you want to play: a single (or multiple) *one-shot* or a *campaign*.

One shots, are, by definition unconnected adventures, which the players can play in any order, and even with different characters (or swapping them). This is an excellent way to explore the setting for

Storyteller's Tip: Colorful Places

One of the best ways to immerse your players in the game are locations. Encounters must not be in nondescript areas, but in typical places of the setting. For example, if the heroes are chased by the guards of the Vizier, this doesn't happen in a generic road of Bagdad, but in the Bazaar, with all of its colors and confusion. If they are looking for a book, they don't find it in a generic library, instead it is kept in an ancient mosque, where nobody can enter... With little effort you can create scenes that help immerse the players in the setting.

Optional: Non-Dreamers

Characters and Stories

Despite the fact that the main theme of the game as we present it is the sleep of Scheherazade, and the fact that the game supposes that all the players are Dreamers, you can easily ditch this supposition, and play a group of persons who weren't in the stories of the princess (and didn't dream of her), or even a mixed group of adventures, some dreamers and some not, which can lead to a very interesting game.

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the first time. If you are playing a one shot, you can have a very condensed Session Zero, and you probably won't explore the Campaign Focus (see below for both).

On the contrary, campaigns are a series of interconnected scenarios, where the players play the same character, and watch them change and grow (if they don't die, obviously).

Creating a character in this game is very fast, rules-wise, so both types of games are possible.

Campaign Hook and Focus

The biggest problem, when planning a campaign is finding a reason for the heroes to be together, a *Hook*.

The setting provides one: all the characters are by default persons who had been in contact with Scheherazade, who used them as inspiration for her stories. And all the heroes saw her in dream, asking for help.

From this basic hook, you and the players can individualize your campaign: was the dream communal (so all the heroes were present, in a sort of shared experience) or individual? If not, how did they discover the existence of the others? (Maybe they haven't yet).

It is also quite loose, providing room for very different types of characters and motivations.

Scheherazade told one thousand stories. This means a lot of characters. Did all of them share the dream? And, more importantly: do they care about it?

This aspect should be discussed with the players during Session Zero (see next page).

The second step in planning a campaign is the *Focus*, in other words, "the big plan".

Even in this case, the game gives a general one: discovering what has caused Scheherazade's enchanted sleep and why.

In this book, you won't find a clear answer to this question. There are clues, a number of them, which you can use to devise your own reason for Scheherazade's sleep and create a grandiose campaign around this (or you can wait for the publishing of the official *Dream of Scheherazade Campaign*, which will give you all the official answers to these questions).

Or, you can simply decide to keep the mystery of Scheherazade's enchanted sleep in the background, and concentrate on its effects.

After all, the caliphate has become a darker place, and there are a number of more focused campaigns that the heroes can play through: for example, protecting a city from the evils of the desert, joining a caravan and seeking adventure in far-away lands, or embarking on a ship and living out a number of epic stories on the sea.

You can also opt for a serial option: as in a television series, where each episode has a main theme, but contains also a clue or a piece of evidence leading to the solving of Scheherazade's mystery.

Note that you have no need, at this point, to prepare an adventure. On the contrary, we suggest you to wait for...

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...Session Zero

The very first session, during which the players create their characters, is very important for the entire campaign. We suggest that you pay particular attention in it. This session should be played as described below.

Get the Players Introduced to the Setting

The very first step is telling the players what they are going to play, and getting them excited!

This is accomplished by describing the setting to them.

Scheherazade is strong in this area, because it has an implied setting. Everybody knows or has heard something about the Arabian Nights. The traditional tale of Scheherazade is widely known, you only have to tell them the twist of the game (Scheherazade is sleeping and cannot be awoken), and who the heroes are (characters Scheherazade has met).

At this point, there is no need to explain the setting in detail. The "vanilla" Arabian Nights players have in their heads is usually sufficient to let them make up characters and start the game. Alternatively, you can have them read the chapter The World of Scheherazade before the session, or even better, you can actually play through some scenes, playing the role of Ali, while he leads the heroes (for now nondescript), in the library of Bagdad and in discovering the diary of the Barber.

Player Expectations

Now that the players have an idea of the setting, it is time to discuss the expectations of the group (Storyteller included) for the game.

There are several aspects to be touched on.

Mood and Sensible Themes. Scheherazade, by default is a "teen" game, which a parent can easily play with their children. The mood is light-hearted and fabulous, but there are a number of "dials" you can adjust, not all of which are appropriate for every group.

The first dial is the presence of horror and creepy elements. Despite there being monsters, undead, and cannibals present, they aren't gory by default, and the general atmosphere is lighthearted. If you want, you can make the setting more frightening, concentrating on the scary details, but all the players must be comfortable, so it is better to decide this in Session Zero.

Other dials to consider are the sensual themes: the game by default doesn't deal with these aspects, but remember that certain parts of the One Thousand and One Nights focus quite heavily on this topic. If you want to include this theme to some extent, make it clear at the gaming table.

Another dial you can set is the importance of stories and storytelling in your campaign. By default, they are quite central to the game, and the players should be required, in some moments, to step up and tell a tale by themselves. Not all players are comfortable with this approach, which can cause anxiety at the table. In this case, you can handle the storytelling part mechanically, with a PAS+REA roll (usually LvL 3).

The last dial is lethality, which by default is quite low: the characters are the heroes and should not die frequently, but there

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is the Injuries Optional Rules, which can make the game grittier if desired.

Type of Adventures. After pointing out what the sensitive elements are, you must discuss what kind of game you and your players are most interested in. Combat? Exploration? Social interaction? Investigation? Usually campaigns are a mix of all the above elements, but knowing which aspects are of more interest to the players is vital to having everybody enjoy the game.

Free Roaming or Tales. Another type of question you must discuss is what type of freedom they desire to have. It isn't an obvious question: a free roaming game simply requires you, the Storyteller, to give the heroes a rough description of the caliphate, and ask the players where they go and what they do. The rest is simply a consequence of their actions. This type of game can be very rewarding, but don't expect to "create a story" in this way: the tale is what emerges from the players' actions, and could be very different from what you imagined.

The second option consists instead of presenting the players a tale, a premade scenario (or a series of them), like a mission to accomplish, a secret to unravel, and so on. This type of a game gives the player less freedom, but a more focused game.

Both ways can be entertaining and usually campaigns are a mix of the two (in different proportions), but knowing which type will be the dominant one is important

Importance of the Meta Plot. Scheherazade has, by default, a strong plot: the heroes are chosen to discover what happened to the princess and awaken her. This element can be the focus of the campaign, or remain in the background: after all, Scheherazade met and told the stories of hundreds of people, and it isn't necessarily the player characters who are the ones who must awaken her: there are dozens of other interesting tales to live and places to go in the caliphate.

After discussing the themes of the campaign, you should help the players to create their heroes.

Helping Players with Creating a Concept

Finding a suitable Concept is the most difficult element of creating a character, since there are no classes in the game. There are various ways to help the players.

Ask Them Questions. What would you like to be? Strong and powerful? Cunning and subtle? Young? Old? A mage? Those questions can help them (or send them into total confusion, too).

Give Them Examples. You can show them the entries of the Birthright Table to be inspired by, and remind them that they can customize the results.

Random Creation. Finally, one or more players may decide to roll a random hero from the Birthright Table, circumventing any problem.

Helping Players in Creating a Unique Gift

After choosing the Concept, the numerical part of spending Marks is quite easy, as is Gear selection. Creating a Unique Gift, on the other hand, can be problematic, especially for new players. In the next page, you'll find some suggestions to help them.

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What Do They like? Ask the player what they would prefer.

If they love doing things in a cinematic way, suggest a Technique.
If they love gear and items, suggest that they take a Relic or a Knack (which allows modifying the dice result, triggering on a 6 on the dice).
If they love having a companion, suggest an Ally.
If they are a cautious person, who doesn't love to risk things by rolling, suggest a Training.
If they love resources management, propose an Effort.
If they have a very particular idea in mind, don't veto it, but work with the player to try and see if it can be made into a Special Gift.

Give Them Feedback. Unique Gifts are meant to be used. If a player creates a Gift which you already know won't come up much in the game, tell them, so they can change it.

Give Them Examples. As with the Concept, the Gifts Scroll Table can give the player several ideas.

Random Creation. Finally, one or more players may decide to roll a random Gift from the Gift Table, but remember that in this case as well, you will need to customize it a bit.

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Past Tense

To increase the sense of "telling a story", you can begin the game saying: "And this is the story of how the heroes did..." and then play all the game at past tense ("My character did" instead of "My character does" and so on).

Note that not all gaming groups are comfortable with this form of playing, because it can give them the impression of playing something "already written".

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Changing Gifts. Remember, whatever Unique Gift the player designs, if at the end of the session it seems too strong or too weak, try to change it together with the player.

Note that this option can be invoked by the player too: if they feel that their Gift is not special enough, hear them out and accept a substitution.

Character Connections

Another important point to work on, is how the characters met. By default, the game assumes that all the heroes had the same dream about Scheherazade, but this doesn't explain why they are together.

Ask each player to invent a connection for their hero with at least one other player character, which can even be a very banal one (like "we ended up in the same room at the caravanserai").

This will give them at least a little common ground.

About Scheherazade. An important (but, at least at the beginning, very optional) detail is how the characters met the princess, and what type of relationship he or she has with her. This detail can become the subject of one of the players' Stories.

Scenario Design

Sooner or later, you'll want to design your own adventure for *Scheherazade*.

Congratulations! This is exactly what this game is meant to do: stimulate your creativity and let you tell the stories you want.

A whole book would not be enough to teach you all the tricks, but we'll give you some ideas.

Inspiration and Documentation

The first step of any project is getting the idea. In general, a GM takes inspiration from whatever form of entertainment he or she likes more: books, comics, movies, videogames, and so on.

In *Scheherazade* you are somewhat lucky: your main source of inspiration should be the One Thousand and One Nights, in their many translations, plus a number of other derivative media you can find listed in the last chapter of this book.

This doesn't mean that these must be your exclusive sources: creative minds work in strange ways, often taking unseen paths, so there is nothing wrong if your idea has a western or crime story mood, the important thing is that you cast it well in the setting.

The Random Page Method. If you are really stuck, you can try this way. Pick your copy of the One Thousand and One Nights, and open it at a random page: you'll find a story there, try to be inspired by it.

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Historical Accuracy

Despite being a fabulous setting, *Scheherazade* is actually set in the real world, in particular in the region from India to Arabia, with a main focus on ancient Persia. This means that there is a lot of real-world information that you can dig into, if you want: customs, habits, legends.

The question is: do you really need to spend hours on the Internet or in the library to design a RPG scenario?

Of course you don't, you can go with a more generic representation of the Arabian Nights, and your game will still run smoothly, but obviously, if you do some research by yourself and insert it into your game, the result will come across as more realistic.

Scenario Types

Ok, you have a rough idea for an adventure, how do you actually prepare it?

Basically, there are two types of scenarios in RPGs: *location-based* and *scene-based*.

The first type, *location based* adventures, consists of detailing only a handful of locations, and basically letting the players loose in it. There is no plot (but there can be events occurring), and the story will emerge from the actions of the players.

It is a low-preparation type of game, but requires good improvisation techniques from you, and a group of proactive players. This style of game can bog down if the party wanders aimlessly.

Note that a location-based scenario doesn't need to be boundless and enormous. You can decide, for example, that the current session will be a day at the Great Bazaar of Bagdad. You sketch a small map of the bazaar, identifying some interesting locations (a couple of inns, a mosque, two shops, and a couple of important characters' houses), add in some events (a spectacular theft in the market, a slave escaping from his master, two religious congregations having a fight in the plaza, and, finally, a fire).

With all these ingredients you can surely make a spectacular session, with little or no preparation.

The second type, *scene-based* scenarios, are the opposite. The GM has a situation in mind, which, very importantly, should not be an inalterable story, but rather, a flexible timeline of events which will be influenced by the heroes' actions.

Splitting the story into a number of scenes gives the GM control of a very important element of the game: rhythm. You can alternate fast, action scenes, with social, exploration, and more reflective situations, leading the party to an exciting finale.

Note that the two types of scenarios aren't mutually exclusive: you can make a location-based scenario with some "quests" the heroes can find (leading to scene-based mini adventures), or, you can insert various location based parts into scene-based adventures.

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Elements of the Game

Now you have a basic idea of the structure of your scenario, but what are the elements you'll put into it? The "things the players will do"?

There are number of elements which interest different types of players, which can be categorized into rough types.

Exploration. Discovering new locations, objects, and customs is one of the things about RPGs that is interesting to most players. This is a way to feel like the player is experiencing the setting. It's like being a tourist in a foreign country, but more focused on adventurous things.

Combat. Conflicts and fights are another element interesting to many players, for a number of reasons. First, combats are emotional and dramatic, raising up the tension. Second, combats (especially if you win) are a way to assert the existence of your character in game.

Social Interaction. A game world should be rich with interesting NPCs, with which the players will want to interact, from the cunning beggar Ali, to the theatrical merchant in the bazaar, and the seductive odalisque. For certain players, the change to really "play" their role is very rewarding.

Stories. A focal element of *Scheherazade* is stories. The players will hear them in the game, tell them, and, actually, live through one of them. You should include at least one occasion for them to tell a story (and to gain Moon Points) in each scenario.

How many of the elements above should you include in a scenario? The answer depends on you and the taste of your players: if they love exploration, try to include many exploration scenes. If they are chatters, allow them to meet a number of interesting NPCs.

In our experience, groups are composed of different types of players, so putting a balanced mix of these elements into each of your scenarios is a good choice, at least until you have a chance to get to learn the tastes and inclinations of your party.

Prepping Tips

The main cause of the abrupt ending of a campaign, is the GM losing interest in the game. This happens mainly because crafting scenarios, week after week, can become a real chore, entertaining at the beginning, a burden after a month or two.

This game helps you, because the ruleset is quite simple, and the creatures' stats are easy to create on the fly.

That said, there are a number of things you can do to be a good *Scheherazade* GM without quitting your day job.

Create a Realistic Plan. When you design a campaign, it is easy to have a grandiose idea for a long complex campaign requiring many years to play through. It will probably be doomed to fail, for a number of reasons. Instead, concentrate on creating shorter story arcs, from two to six months of playing time. Completing them will be very rewarding. They don't need to end the campaign, you can leave them open to continuation, but in this way you can "break" the game into completed parts.

Manage Your Time. The time a person has for their hobbies, regardless of their enthusiasm, is limited. Use it wisely. Do you really need to write the adventure in minute detail, like a book?

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Practical Storytelling Tips

Nobody is born Storyteller, and you'll probably mess up something. Relax, it's normal and natural. The tips below can be useful to help you run a better game.

Propose Situations, not Plots. The commonest mistake a new Storyteller makes is creating a plot in his mind, and forcing the players to follow it. Even in scene-based adventures (see previous page), simply put the heroes in a situation, and give them the freedom to act as they want.

Player's Skill versus Roll. Don't roll too much. In any situation where the player's wit can resolve a situation, let them do it without rolling.

Example. A player says his character is searching for secret doors in the princess's room, looking behind the wardrobe and under the bed. If there is a secret passage there, don't ask for a roll, the character finds it because the player had the right idea.

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Reward Creativity. A corollary of the previous point, in general when a player has a good idea, reward them even if their solution "ruins your plans" (allows them to skip a carefully prepared fight, lets them avoid a trap, and so on): you will be surprised how much better your game will be! This doesn't mean you must accept any crazy or unrealistic idea the party has...

Meaningful Roll. When you ask the players to roll for something, the result must change the situation in some manner, especially if a Consequence happens.

Success with a Cost. Sometimes, a hero fails an action by very little (one point of margin of failure). In this case, instead of a total failure, you can decide to allow them to succeed with a cost, as if they had succeeded with a Bad Consequence. Don't overuse this option.

Impossible Things are Impossible. By design, certain actions are impossible for certain characters. A hero rolling 6 dice cannot beat the LvL 7 necessary to jump over a six yards wide chasm. This should encourage the player to find a suitable tactic or tool to reduce the Difficulty, to ask for the help of their friends, or to find another way.

In truth, no: some notes and an abstract map will be enough, and, the more concise they are, the easier it will be for you to see the whole campaign in the process. Are those professional-level maps you make (and don't show to the players) really necessary? Of course not.

This doesn't mean you shouldn't work on the game aspects you like, but try maximizing the use of your time: focus on creating a nice plot (without writing dozens of pages), and interesting riddles and puzzles and props that your players can see and use.

Delegate. Many GMs take on every aspect of the campaign. They must control and do everything in the game: run the session, create the characters for the players, background included, write the campaign log, write rules summary for the laziest players, and a lot of other activities. Don't do it. For two reasons. The first is that you are taking away part of the fun from the players. The second is that you already have a lot of jobs to do on your own. Roleplaying games should be collaborative, let the players do their part.

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Running Combats

This chapter gives you additional advice on running combats in the game.

Group Enemies

It could happen, especially in combat, that you pit a number of enemies against the party. In this case, you can decide to use the Group Enemies rule, which means that you basically "combine" multiple characters into a single game entity.

Take the highest LvL enemy as the base LvL, and add +1 to this LvL if they have an ally helping them.

Every time the number of characters doubles, they gain another +1 (see table below). The bonus applies mainly to Attack and Defense, but the Storyteller can decide if it extends to other cases too (a group of guards can be more difficult to fool than a single one, for example).

Group Enemies attack and defend as a single creature, but maintain separate Life scores: when the group suffers damage, the attacker decides where to allocate damage, every time the group loses one or more elements, the group level can drop (see table below).

You can make as many groups as you want: the commonest way is to divide the total of enemies by the number of heroes, creating more or less equivalent groups, but it isn't mandatory.

Group Enemies are basically the NPC version of the Helping action (which NPCs cannot use).

Lower Level Allies. To grant a bonus for the purposes of the Group Enemies rule, there must be not more than 4 levels of difference between the allies. So, a LvL 10 dragon won't benefit from the help of a LvL 1 beggar, but will receive a bonus from a LvL 6 efreet.

Causing Effects To Group Enemies. When fighting against Group Enemies, you can distribute Effects to any member of the group as you see fit.

Example. Aliyaya sneaks into the harem of Yusuf the Desert Merchant, looking for information, but she is discovered by a eunuch who calls for help! Yelling guards rush into the harem, swords in hands. They are fairly inexperienced (LvL 2), but there are six of them! The Storyteller decides to use the Group Enemies rule, this means that the guards are considered a single enemy of LvL 2+2=4! After the first round of combat, Aliyaya manages to deal 2 damage, enough to kill one of them (they have 2 Life each), but there are still five allies, enough to maintain the LvL of the group at 4. In the second round, with a lucky strike, she deals 4 damage, killing two enemies. Now there are only 3 enemies, and the LvL Bonus drops to +1.

Group Enemies Table

NUMBER OF CHARACTERS	LVL BONUS
1	0
2	+1
4	+2
8	+3
16	+4

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Combat Zones

Scheherazade is played in "theater of the mind" style, but that doesn't mean that combat happens in an empty space. Just the opposite, the environment is very important to staging an interesting fight. No combat should happen in an indefinite location. There are a number of interesting places you can use: dark alleys, tops of minarets, flying carpets, desert storms, crowded battlefields, and so on.

Environment Interaction. Depending on the general location in which the fight happens, you can define the features of the Combat Zones. As a rule of thumb, at least one third of them should have a distinctive element of some type, which the heroes can use and interact with.

Below you find some examples of Zone Features, which you can easily customize. To help you, they are organized in a random table, so that you can simply roll once per Zone to create them.
Note that they are simply ideas, feel free to expand and combine them.

Interacting with Zones. Remember that *often it is the behavior of the characters which gives you the mechanic of Zone*: a pile of crates can be Cover if used to hide behind, a Prop if pushed against an opponent, or a Shortcut if a hero climbs onto it and jumps somewhere. As always, reward creativity.

Double Effect (/). Certain features contain two entries, separated by /. The first entry applies for the odd number, the second effect for the even number.

Special Situations

A number of interesting events and situations can happen in your game. Foreseeing and coming up with rulings for all of them is outside the scope of this ruleset, but we can give some of them, which can serve as examples for creating new ones as you need them.

Rests and Stories

Remember, during play, to insert moments during which the characters can rest, and, if they wish to, tell stories.
If you are playing a multi-session scenario, try to put rests at the end of the session, so that the players can tell stories off-line.

In published scenarios, Rests are indicated with the icon you see in this paragraph.
If you don't manage to put an opportunity to Rest at the end of the session, try to finish the session with a cliffhanger.

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Combat Zones Features Table

D66	FEATURE	EXAMPLE
11-36	No feature	-
41-42	**Cover/Blocking.** Ranged attacks through a Cover Zone have their difficulty increased by one. A Blocking Zone instead prevents any ranged attack from being shot across it.	Pile of wares make excellent Cover. A thick wall is Blocking.
43-44	**Obstacle.** Entering the Zone requires a LvL 2+ or more (at Storyteller's discretion) POW+COU test (but other rolls are possible). In case of failure, the character cannot enter (or leave) the Zone.	A fence or a chasm is an Obstacle.
45-46	**Difficult/Impassable.** A Difficult Zone requires a Lvl 2 (PRE+CAU) roll to pass through it. If you fail, you cannot cross the Zone, and the movement is considered spent. An Impassable Zone cannot be entered or crossed.	A rough hill is a Difficult Zone. A chasm is Impassable.
51-52	**Prop.** The Zone contains an item which can be used in some creative way: it can lower the Difficulty of an attack or a defense by 2, or create the effect of another Zone Type. Characters can interact with a prop with the Do Something action. Usually a Prop can be used only once.	A brazier full of embers is a Prop. It can be used to fill a zone with fire (Danger), or thrown against an enemy (-2 to attack's Difficulty). A door can be used to create an Obstacle in the Zone.
53-54	**Danger.** The Zone deals a LvL 3+ attack every round, or causes automatic damage whenever a Consequence is rolled (negative Consequence: damage to the hero, positive consequence, damage to the opponents).	Fighting on a rooftop is a Dangerous Zone: whenever a character rolls a consequence, the hero or their opponents fall down (a LvL 3 attack – see falling rules).
55-56	**Narrow/Open.** A Narrow Zone allows only two characters to fight. You cannot use the Group Enemies rule. An Open Zone is the opposite - a really open area and Group Enemies are considered a LvL higher.	A door threshold is a Narrow Zone. The middle of a ship's deck is a Open Zone.
61-62	**Shortcut.** The Zone can be used to reach another Zone not directly adjacent.	A balcony is a Shortcut: it allows reaching the end of the mosque without crossing the central area.
63-64	**Advantage/Disadvantage**. The area is particularly easy or difficult (-1 or +1 LvL) in combat.	A Zone on higher ground makes easier to fight (-1 Difficulty).
65-66	Roll two times and combine the results!	

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Social Conflicts

If you expect to find rules for social conflicts in *Scheherazade*, I must give you some bad news, there aren't any. In this game, the social interactions should be done through role-play.

This isn't an absolute, obviously.

Certain players are uncomfortable speaking "in character": for those you can let them roll on PAS+COU to intimidate, or on REA+POW to persuade someone.

Stories. Remember that in some situations the characters could resolve a social situation by telling a story (for example to entertain a monster or a noble).

Hazards

Cruel bandits and evil djinn are powerful enemies, but don't forget that many other things can make life difficult for the heroes. They are briefly described below.

Falling

Heroes in *Scheherazade* will probably have the occasion of run over rooftops, leap across chasms, battle on flying carpets, and get into similar situations, all occasions where the chance of falling is very real.

Falling is an attack against which the character must defend (CAU+COU). The Effect from a falling attack usually results in damage.

Cliffhanger Rule. In a game of cinematic action, when a hero is about to fall, they should be allowed to hold onto the edge of the chasm, with a LvL 2 (PRE+COU) roll. In case of failure, the hero falls normally, but if they succeed, in the next round they can try to get back onto solid ground with a LvL 3, POW+PAS roll.

Storyteller's Tip: Hazards as Plot Devices

An important recommendation on hazards: use them as menaces and threat for the heroes, or as ways to introduce a new element in the campaign, not as instruments to destroy them. For example, during an intense chase over the rooftops, the heroes should face the risk of falling, but it must be a risk, not a certainty, and, even if they fall, perhaps there is cart full of straw (or manure...) under them which may save their life but remove them from the chase. Used creatively, hazards can improve your game and add to the excitement.

Falling Damage

HEIGHT	LVL
Low (a floor)	1
Medium (two floors)	3
High (three floors or more)	6
Very High (bottomless pit, top of a mountain)	10
Spikes on the bottom	+2
Soft ground (snow, manure, straw, water)	-3

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Fear

When the heroes face something horrible (a monster, an event, and so on) the Storyteller may ask them to roll on COU+PAS (see table below). *Consider Fear a defense roll, whose Effect can be spent by the attacker only as follows:*

- **Hinder.** Spend one Effect to increase by +1 the Difficulty of the hero's actions until his next round (a suitable description is necessary).
- **Escape.** Spend three Effect to force the hero to flee screaming or something similar (like being freezed on the place).

Note that the opponents' descriptions won't tell you when to ask for a Fear roll: what really scares a person depends on who he or she is (a ghul hunter won't be scared by monsters, for example), and the circumstances. You, the Storyteller, must decide when to ask for one.
Usually, only a single Fear roll is required per encounter.

Fear Roll Difficulty Table

FEAR CAUSE	LVL
A little scary	1
Raises the hair	3
Really scary	6
Not Meant for the Human Mind	10

Fire

A character exposed to fire must make a CAU+COU roll to avoid suffering damage, at a rate of 1 per margin of failure. The LvL of the test depends on the intensity of the fire.

Fire Spreading. Every round (in combat) or scene (during other situations), roll a Fate Die. On a 6, the fire spreads, increasing its LvL by 1. If the fire's LvL is 5 or more, roll 2 dice instead (the fire spreads if at least one 6 is scored).

Fire Intensity Table

FIRE INTENSITY	LVL
Torch	1
Camp Fire	3
Large Fire (building burning)	6
Raging Inferno	10

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Poisons and Diseases

The caliphate isn't a safe place: poisonous beasts, plants and strange illnesses can kill a hero as easily as a sword.

A very important factor to consider when introducing such a threat, is that *poisons and diseases should not be a way to quickly kill the characters, but a meaningful plot device for the scenario*.

So, for example, a hero (or an NPC) poisoned with a very slow toxin could become the reason for the party to embark on a particular quest, or to avoid a village where a very virulent pestilence is rampant, forcing them to find an alternate way.

Effect and Duration. Mechanically, poisons and diseases work in the same way. A victim exposed to it must make a POW+COU Test (at the LvL of the disease or the poison, or of the venomous creature), which must be repeated at a fixed interval described in the hazard's description (Effect column). Whenever the roll is failed, the hazard takes effect. *The effect lasts until the hero Recovers* (see below).

Poison and Disease Example Table

THREAT	LVL	DESCRIPTION	EFFECT	RECOVERY
POISON				
Generic Poison	Creature's LvL	Generic poison used for snakes, venomous plants, and so on	Scene: Lose 1 Life per scene	Natural
Drug of the Ashashins	4	The intoxicant of the Ashashins	Scene: COU+2, doesn't fear death	Normal
Fake Death Poison	7	Made by alchemists, used to fake death	Day: feign dead for the duration, roll a Fate Die	Automatic, but if the Fate Die is a Negative Consequence, the victim dies
Poppy's Milk	4	An extract from the poppy flower	Scene: fall into a deep slumber	Normal
ILLNESS				
Leprosy	3	A terrible malady which cause the progressive rotting of the body	Month: permanently loses one Mark in a random Attribute	Only with magical means
Desert Fever	1-6	A generic term for the unknown fevers of the desert	Day: fatigue, +1 Difficulty per margin of failure to all physical tasks	Normal

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Recovery. Certain poisons and diseases can be cured by receiving a suitable antidote or medicine, or being healed by a hakim or another healer (REA+PRE Test against the LvL of the threat). By default, the victim can also recover naturally, by succeeding three times in a row at the Interval Roll.

Multiple doses of poison usually don't stack.

Thirst and Hunger

Scheherazade isn't a game about famine, but it could happen, especially in the desert, that the heroes become stranded without food and water.

When this happens, follow these instructions.

The first day without water nothing happens, but the character cannot recover Energy and Life by resting.

From the *second day on, they start losing one Life per day*.

When Life reaches zero, the character is dead.

The same applies for food (in which case, ignore the first two days).

Eating or drinking plenty stops the victim from losing Life, and allows them to start recovering Energy and Life.

Tokens and Thresholds

A problem many Storytellers have is how to assess the effects of the players' actions, especially when they aren't immediate and/or include a number of different factors, like time, use of a resource, and so on.

You can do it by simplifying them to the core using Tokens and setting Thresholds. What does this mean?

When a particular type of event happens, put a Token on the table (or remove one). When the number of Tokens is equal to a certain Threshold, something happens.

Hidden or Public. Tokens can be public, so everybody can see them, or hidden, only for the Storyteller (in this case you can simply count them mentally or write the totals down somewhere). The effect of having the Tokens be public is that the players, knowing of their existence, will probably try to influence their number.

Tokens are a very powerful tracking tool for the Storyteller, and they have a number of uses.

Does this mechanic seem too abstract? See the example below.

The Alarm. The heroes must penetrate a palace without being noticed. You have the map of the place, with the occupants of the various rooms noted, and you know that, if the heroes cause too much ruckus, the alarm will be raised, and the guards will eventually arrive. But how can you assess "how much" is "too much ruckus"? You can do it with Alarm Tokens. Every time the characters do something noisy (like crashing through a door, fighting someone, etc.) they receive an Alarm Token. When they reach a threshold (let's say, 5 Tokens), the alarm starts. This system lets you handle a number of situations: for example, the players can find a way to reduce their Alarm Tokens, like wearing the uniform of a servant they knocked out, or staying quiet for a while. On the other hand, they can trigger some event that causes Alarm Tokens to be added unless they stop it. For example, a screaming servant can get them one Token per round until silenced....

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Character Advancement

Advancement is an important point of any RPG. Advancement happens in two ways: mechanically, and through adventuring.

Mechanical Advancement is driven by the players: they simply spend their experience to buy new Marks and allocate them, improving their Attributes, Concept, and Unique Gift.

Adventuring advancement depends instead on what the heroes do and find in the game world: a mage, for example, cannot simply buy new spells, he must find them.

Adventuring is also the only way a character can gain another Unique Gift.

Magical items and wealth are also found during adventures.

To put it in other terms, *Adventuring Advancement depends on the actions of the players*, not on the mere gaining of experience points.

When you design a scenario or campaign, you should be sure to include those adventuring advancements for your players to find.

We suggest emphasizing *Adventuring Advancement over experience points*.

The main types of Adventuring Advancements are described below, in order of rarity (from the most common to the most rare, which should be awarded sparingly):

1. Connections and Acknowledgements
2. Treasures
3. Magic Items and Rare Spells
4. Unique Gifts

They are all described below.

Connections and Acknowledgements

If you are a hero, well, you can make a lot of friends.

So, if you save a poor beggar boy from the guards of the Vizier, you probably now have a friend for life, who can report to you things he hears in the marketplace, and maybe perform a shady act or two for you.

In the same manner, the tavern keeper whose daughter you rescued from bandits will host you for free in their humble inn.

The Caliph can assign you a title and a plot of land for your help against the Ashashins who tried to kill him (permanently gaining a Resources point).

This type of reward can be very useful to a character, without being unbalancing.

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Treasures

Instead of counting up coins and gems as loot, *Scheherazade* handles treasures of some value with an abstraction called *Treasure Points*, which represent something more than the coins you can find in the purse of a random thug in the bazaar.

Treasure points can be spent in a number of ways, detailed in the Player Guide (see page 67).

Treasure Points aren't only gems and coins, they can also be precious wares, like silk, spices, art pieces, and so on, in which case they may have the Heavy Keyword.

The table below gives you some idea on how many Treasure Points a trove is worth.

Treasure Points Table

TROVE	TREASURE POINTS VALUE
Very Small (purse of a merchant, single precious gem)	1
Small (warehouse of a merchant, stash of a robber band)	5
Substantial (Babylonian tomb, nest of a roc)	10
Large (loot of the forty thieves of Ali Baba, pharaoh's tomb)	20
Very Large (a prince's ransom)	40

Magical Items

Magic is a force which is very present in the Arabian Nights. Despite the fact that the heroes can cast some spells, the real force of magic they can wield is provided by the magical items they will find in the course of their adventures.

You, the Storyteller, should create them, tailoring them to your story and the party members, following these suggestions.

Make them Unique. Magic items should be unique and wondrous. If you are thinking of giving your heroes a "magical sword which makes them stronger in combat" you aren't probably doing it right. Invent some backstory and some cool powers for it. If you want to give them only a bonus in some field, you can accomplish that easily with the Gear Keywords, but the item won't be truly magical, perhaps only an item of note, like a blade of Damascus, an armor of the far away north lands, and so on.

Give them a Story. The best way to create an interesting magical item is giving it a story. Who created it and for what purpose? What caused the presence of the item in the world?

Think Out of the Box for Powers. When you have decided what the item does, don't let the game mechanics bog you down. If you invented an enchanted pot capable of feeding an army of men, you don't need to detail how much food it actually produces, create a mechanic to handle it, and so on. You simply narrate the fact.

Be Non-Linear. Magic works in different ways from science, and follow different rules, but they have a thing in common: balance. The more powerful an item is, the bigger the cost and strings that it has attached: for example, the food made by the magical pot above isn't really

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nutritious, or continued use of it can make a person torpid. Alternatively, it can be limited in time: a powerful relic could be lent by the forces of good to a hero for a specific task, then the item is taken back, or loses its powers.

Power. Rule-wise, magical items can be game breakers, if used without caution. The first risk is that the players start relying on them too much, and try to solve every problem with them. The second is that they can actually be too powerful. Below, you'll find some example items, each of them with a power level: *Low*, *Medium*, and *High*. In general, Low items aren't game breakers, and even if the party has one per hero, they won't do any damage. Medium power items, on the other hand, must be used with caution. Try not to give more than one per hero. High power items could easily break a game, we suggest not giving more than one per party, or (even better), to give them for a limited time.

Using them as Relics. A character with the Relic Gift will demand a magical item for his hero. As a guideline, at Rank 1 you can give him one of Low Power indicated below (or create one of comparable power), improving it to Rank 2 and 3. Note that a magical item of Medium Power is usually comparable to a Rank 2 Relic, while an item of High Power is beyond Rank 3.

BLESSED DATE STONES

Power: Medium

Dates are sweet and tasty. A man can live for weeks on only water and dates. And the dates harvested and eaten by a holy man have great powers. Their stones, after the pulp is eaten by the holy man, if thrown at a djinn (with a PAS+PRE roll) banish such a creature for 99 years and 99 days. They are powerful weapons, but can be used only once, because they are destroyed in the process.

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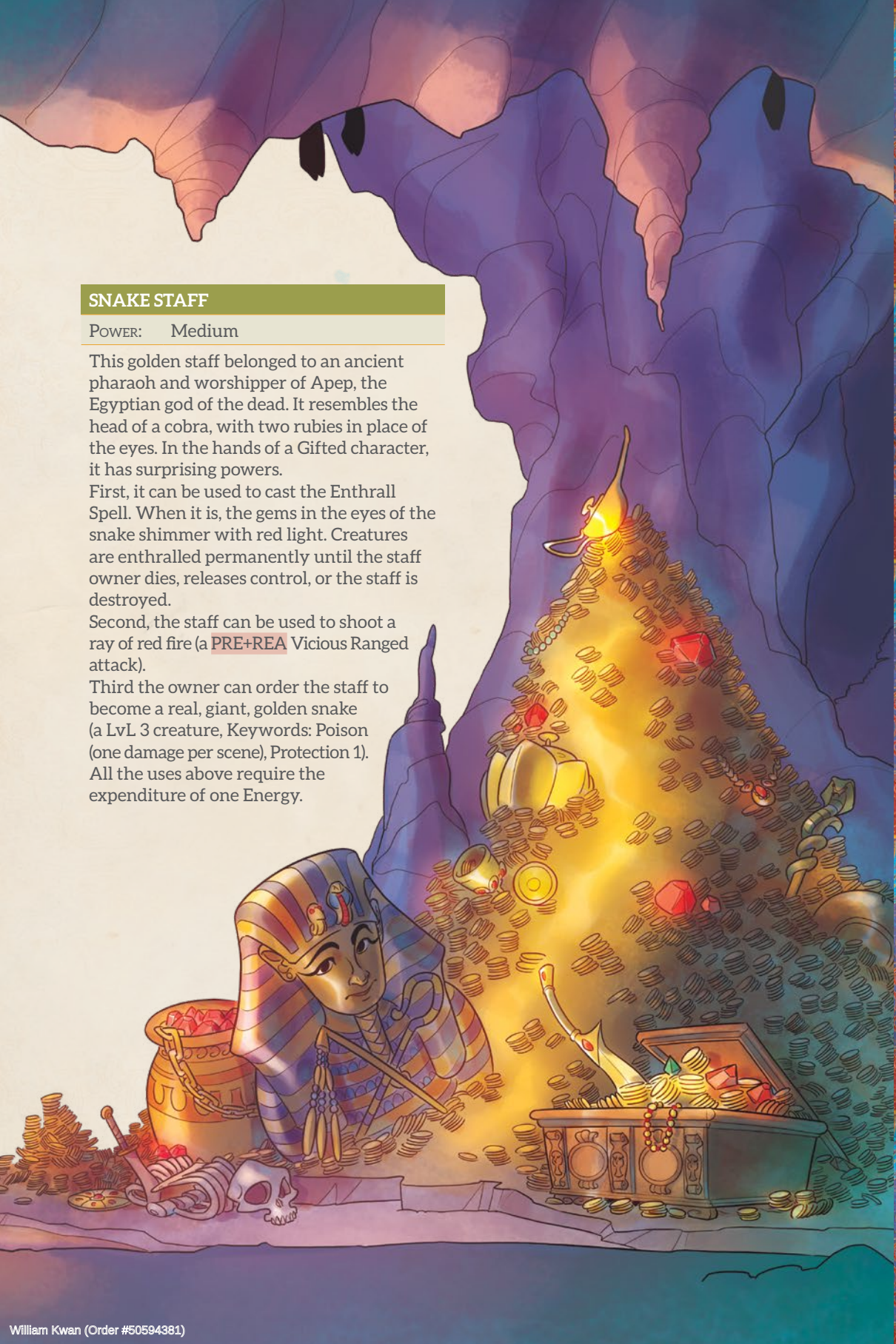

SNAKE STAFF

POWER: Medium

This golden staff belonged to an ancient pharaoh and worshipper of Apep, the Egyptian god of the dead. It resembles the head of a cobra, with two rubies in place of the eyes. In the hands of a Gifted character, it has surprising powers.

First, it can be used to cast the Enthrall Spell. When it is, the gems in the eyes of the snake shimmer with red light. Creatures are enthralled permanently until the staff owner dies, releases control, or the staff is destroyed.

Second, the staff can be used to shoot a ray of red fire (a PRE+REA Vicious Ranged attack).

Third the owner can order the staff to become a real, giant, golden snake (a LvL 3 creature, Keywords: Poison (one damage per scene), Protection 1).

All the uses above require the expenditure of one Energy.

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Enchanted Scimitar Table

DIE	LVL	LIFE	KEYWORDS
1	3	1	None
2	4	2	Vicious
3	4	3	Dangerous
4	5	4	Vicious, Protection 1
5	5	5	Dangerous, Reach
6	6	6	Attrition 1 (Flaming)

A note on Flying Carpets

Flying carpets are very powerful items, because they can be used to go to far-away places without the need to walk or ride, or to easily reach places which should be very difficult to reach (like the tops of towers or mountains). This may be perfectly fine in your campaign, or could be a source of problems. We suggest some solutions for this problem:

Needs to be Fueled. Only a Gifted character can fly a carpet, and must fuel it with one Energy per scene.

Needs to Rest. After being used for a scene, the carpet cannot fly again for a Fate Die days.

ENCHANTED SCIMITAR

Power: Low (1-3 on the table) or Medium (4-6 on the table)

This ensorcelled blade is capable of fighting by itself! Once given the proper command (like, "Sword, defend me!") the weapon floats in the air, animated by an unseen force, and fights.

These blades are considered characters of variable LvL (roll the Fate Die and check the table below). When used by a hero, they roll dice as characters (us the Active Rolling rule). Activating such an item has a cost, the owner must spend one Energy, like a spell, and the sword remains animated for a scene.

FLYING CARPET

Power: High

This magical carpet looks like a customary piece of furniture, but in truth is a powerful artifact. It can fly, carrying up to four people on it (although different sized versions exist). These carpets usually require a command word or some other control system (like touching specific points of it) to activate, but once done, they faithfully serve their owner.

GENIE'S LAMP

Power: High

This lamp hosts a genie, which will serve the owner as best he can (see genie's description in the Opponents chapter). Note that the vessel hosting the Genie can be something different from a lamp, for example, a ring, a brooch. Breaking the vessel sets the Genie free.

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LAMASSU LEG

Power: Medium

This wondrous item is a long shepherd's staff, as tall as man, carved to resemble the fifth leg of a Lamassu. It is perfectly invisible unless the owner wishes it to be seen. It bestows on the user great vigor (+1 maximum Life, -1 Difficulty to resist poisons and diseases) and is a magical weapon with the Reach and Two Hands Keywords. Being an instrument of a fertility demigod, stories say that, planting it in a barren field can make it fertile again.

Each Lamassu has one of these legs, and give them to a person only for very specific purposes, and usually for a limited time.

MAGICAL ROPE

Power: Low

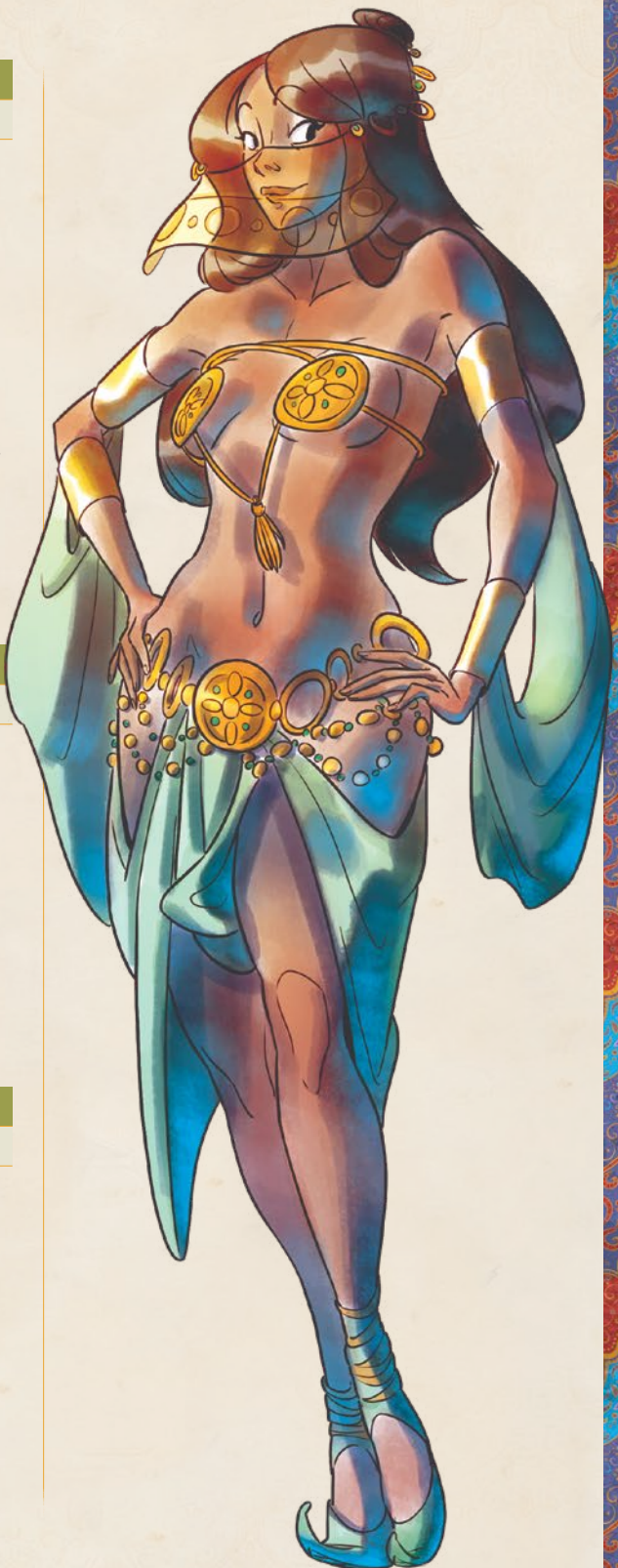
This ordinary-looking rope has the power to raise up, and tie a knot at the command of the user. It can be used to climb walls very easily, and can also be used to attack with REA+PRE, but only to Hinder. In both cases, reduce by two the difficulty of the Action.

Magical ropes are quite sturdy (they can suffer two Damage), but if cut, they lose all their powers.

MAGICAL HAVERSACK

Power: Low

This dusty and battered haversack is the blessing of any traveler. Once a day, the owner can tell him "Haversack, nourish me!" and will find inside a simple meal of bread, olives, figs, and dates, enough to sustain six people.



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OIL OF THE SMITH

Power: Medium

This engraved metal bottle contains a dose of silvery oil. If used on any metal weapon (like a sword, a mace, a spear's tip), it makes it stronger, causing it to deal +1 damage if the owner uses at least one Effect to cause damage with it. This in addition to the effect of any other Keyword.

The same oil, used on armor or a shield, reduces by an additional 1 any damage inflicted on the wearer.

The effect of the Oil of the Smith is permanent, but an item can only benefit from the effects of one dose of it.

STONE OF NECESSITY

Power: Medium

Also known as Anachitis, the Stone of Necessity is part of the Magi cult. It can be used to call up a spirit from a body of water (as small as a basin or as big as a lake), which must answer a question to the stone's owner, to the best of its knowledge. The bigger the pool, the more powerful the spirit summoned is. The wielder usually has no control over what spirit answers the call, and must roll a die and a Fate Die together. The normal die dictates what type of spirit answers (see table), while the Fate die indicates the Difficulty of the PAS+COU roll to force the spirit to answer.

If the Fate Die is 1 the spirit is probably mischievous.

Using the Stone of Necessity costs one Energy, and the item can only be used once per day.

Sinochitis. A second type of Stone of Necessity exists, the Sinochitis, which is used in conjunction with the Anachitis, and forces the spirit to stay. If the user has both stones, they don't have to make the roll to force the spirit to answer (but roll the Fate Die anyway to check whether the spirit is mischievous or not).

Stone of Necessity Spirit Table

D	SPIRIT TYPE
1	Minor spirit of nature
2	Spirit of nature
3	Spirit of dead relative
4	Spirit of dead person
5	Djiin
6	Efreet

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Rare Spells

Rare Spells, enchantments not widely known, are an excellent way to reward Gifted characters. You should invent your own Rare Spells, but we present a few examples for your use or inspiration.

Finding Rare Spells. It should not be easy. These spells are usually well guarded by some monster, lost in some dusty tomb, or the exclusive possession of a reclusive magician who could ask for the hero to perform a specific quest before revealing them.

Learning a Rare Spell. It is usually done between adventures, without the need of any roll. The player simply declares he studied the spell during downtime and adds it to his Character Sheet.

ENSLAVE UNDEAD

Cost:	1 Energy/2 LvLs of the Undead
Component:	Black opal
Duration:	Permanent
Range:	Sight
Effect:	The caster using this spell can take over control of an undead creature. To do so, they must make a PAS+COU test against the creature's LvL. If they are successful, they must pay a number of Energy points equal to half the undead creature's LvL (rounded down), and then the creature becomes their slave. If they fail, the undead attacks them. Note that using this spell isn't necessarily "good", and any character in good standing with God using this spell will lose that good standing.

KNOT MAGIC OF BINDING

Cost:	1 Energy
Component:	A piece of string
Duration:	Scene
Range:	Sight
Effect:	This spell is one of the many applications of knots in magic. It requires a piece of string and free use of the caster's hands. Knotting the string in front of an opponent has the effect of paralyzing his limbs, as if you were binding them. To do so, you must make a PAS+REA test against the creature's LvL. In case of success, the enemy suffers -1 to LvL for all physical tasks, with another -1 per margin of success (exactly like the Paralysis Keyword). If reduced to zero, the target is actually paralyzed. The effect ceases at the end of the scene, or if the knot is untied or destroyed. As always with knot magic, having a hair or other personal possession of the target twined into the string makes the spell more powerful (-1 Difficulty).

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KNOT MAGIC OF PROTECTION

Cost:	1 Energy/Charge
Component:	A piece of string and a hair of the person using it
Duration:	Special (Until all charges are used)
Range:	Special (creates a talisman)
Effect:	This spell is one of the many applications of knots in magic. It requires a piece of string and free use of the caster's hands. Knotting the string in a particular way creates a powerful knot talisman, which is considered a Tool for resisting hostile magic. Each use consumes a "charge" of the talisman, the cost depends on how many charges the caster puts into it when they create it (up to their REA value). When reduced to zero charges, the knot unties itself. Knot talismans are personal, and only work for a specific person (in fact, they include a hair from that specific person). Crafting such a talisman is quite a long process, and requires a scene. No character can have more than a knot talisman active in the same moment. Creating a new one destroys the previous one.

SHROUD OF DEATH

Cost:	1 Energy per character shrouded
Component:	A piece of a funeral shroud
Duration:	Scene
Range:	Personal and/or touch
Effect:	This spell forces undead to not register the presence of the caster and/or of any person they touch. The effect lasts for a scene, but ends immediately if a target attacks (directly or indirectly) an undead. The piece of shroud, necessary to cast this spell, crumbles to dust after use.

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SHAPE CHANGE

Cost:	2 Energy
Component:	-
Duration:	Permanent
Range:	Personal or Sight
Effect:	This spell exists in various forms, each of them transforms the target into a specific creature, usually an animal. So, you'll have Shape Change into a Snake, Shape Change into a Monkey, and so on. If the target is the caster themselves, or a willing subject, the spell works normally, you must only roll the Fate Die for any Consequences (see below). Otherwise, if the target is unwilling, the caster must pass a REA+PRE LvL +2 Test. The transformation is permanent, and the only way for the subject to return to their natural form is to be subject to the same spell again (a mage which transformed him- or herself must only spend the Cost). A transformed character keeps their intelligence and wits (REA and PAS), but cannot speak (unless the form chosen can speak) or cast spells. Every physical capacity is now at a LvL depending on the creature's type (use the Active Rolling rule). You can see some suggestions in the table below. Plus, the target also acquires any other physical feature of the new shape (i.e., a bird can fly, a dragon can breathe fire, and so on). *Consequences*. This spell is dangerous, so a Negative Consequence means the transformation is permanent and cannot be reversed simply by re-casting this spell, but some other solution (like the intervention of a more powerful mage) must be found. A Positive Consequence, on the other hand, means that the chosen form is particularly strong (LvL+1).

Shape Change Spell Creature Table

LVL	CREATURE	NOTES
1	Mouse	LvL 5 to sneak
2	Dog	LvL 4 to find tracks
3	Eagle	Fly
4	Giant Snake	Poison (1 damage per scene)
5	Tiger or Lion	Vicious
6	Bear	Protection 3, Dangerous

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Unique Gifts

The most difficult Adventuring Advancement to design is the Unique Gift, because, by its own nature, it is unique.

They should be the rarest rewards found. Before deciding "what" the gift is, you should decide "How" and "Why" such a Gift is found.

How is a Unique Gift Found? There are many answers to this question.

The first, most straightforward one, is by a teacher, someone who, for whatever reason (see "Why" below) decides to share with the hero his or her knowledge.

The second one is by chance: a hero drinks from a magical fountain and immediately becomes capable of speaking with birds (but maybe there is side effect of some sort).

The third is by a deed: the hero kills the King of Div with a spear, and the black blood of the monster bathes him, making his skin harder.

Why is a Unique Gift Found? There are also a number of answers to this question.

First, by chance: a hero drinks from a fountain and gets the Gift. The real difficulty is finding the fountain (and maybe deciding to drink, given that the water is murky).

Second, actively searching for it. Maybe the hero has heard that Semir the Blind was the best swordsman of Bagdad, and that nobody could parry his Secret Blow. Maybe he can be convinced to reveal it to the hero.

Once you have answers to these questions, you can decide how to design the Gift. If you want, you can ask for feedback from the player who is to receive it, but, since they are getting it for free, they cannot complain about what they get.

Differently from normal Gifts, those found while adventuring can be less standardized, and can also include a negative feature of some sort. Usually, they are found at the base Scope and Rank [1x1].

Below you'll find some examples.

As a last recommendation, *finding a Unique Gift should be a rare occurrence*.

GUARDIAN SPIRIT – ALLY [1X1]	
Effect:	The character has an unseen benevolent spirit, a Qareen, watching over them. The guardian spirit warns the character of danger, and gives useful suggestions. In game terms, it grants extra dice in Initiative, perception, and can detect magic.
Finding it:	Qareen attach to mortals for all their lives, to help them achieve a task of some sort. The only way a hero can gain a Qareen after character creation is "inheriting" that task. For example, if a warrior of old, which had a Qareen with him, died trying to accomplish his mission, the Qareen could attach to the first mortal touching the corpse (and judged fit of accomplishing the dead warrior's task).

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SECRET BLOW OF THE BLIND WARRIOR – EFFORT [1X1]

Effect:	If armed with a sword and spending 1 Energy, the hero can perform a special blow which ignores the Protection and Deflection Keywords of the target, and which has the Lethal Keyword. This attack can be made only once per target.
Finding it:	This blow is a precious secret handed down by generations of dervishes, who originally learned it from a legendary champion of King Xerses. The only person who actually knows it is Semir the Blind, a former dervish who became a hermit and dwells somewhere in the desert south of Bagdad. Semir will teach the blow only to a worthy person answering his Three Riddles of Faith (to be designed by the GM).

KISS OF THE MOTHER CAT – SPECIAL ABILITY [1X1]

Effect:	The Mother Cat is the patron of all thieves, and of cats, of course. A character with this Gift can escape death in some incredible way, but only once per scenario.
Finding it:	The only way to receive this ability is restoring the glory of the ancient Temple of Thieves, buried under the Golden Mosque of Bagdad. To do so, the character must find the skull of Zamir, an ancient Master Thief, and place it on the altar. The problem is that nobody really knows what happened to Zamir after he tried to penetrate the treasury room of the Caliph, thirty years ago...

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Opponents

"Draw that sword, Vizier, and we'll see on whom the favor of Allah shines."

-Prince Rostam

Scheherazade is a game of heroic characters, but also of powerful enemies and monsters. In this chapter you'll learn everything you need about the characters played by the Storyteller, regardless of whether they are monsters, animals, or simply the innkeeper or the tavern girl.

The Expandable Stat Profile

As a rule of thumb, *NPCs in Scheherazade have a single stat: Level (LvL)*. In other words, they are treated as an Action the heroes have to accomplish or an obstacle they have to overcome. So, persuading a beggar (LvL 1) to reveal the information he knows will be a LvL 1 task, while attacking a LvL 3 wolf will be a LvL 3 action.

This generalization simplifies a lot the opponents' creation procedure: give them a LvL and you are done.

But this approach makes NPCs simplistic, a LvL 5 warrior has 5 Life, attacking him and defending from him is LvL 5, and this is reasonable, but what about persuading him? LvL 5 doesn't make as much sense in this case.

For this reason, *the profile of creatures is expandable*. Below you will find a list of

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possible *attributes of creatures, which you must consider only if different from the LvL*. When they aren't expressed, simply assume they are equal to LvL.

Attack. This is the LvL of Difficulty to defend from the creature.

Defense. This is the LvL of Difficulty to successfully attack the creature.

Life. The amount of damage the creature can sustain (as the player characters).

Initiative. The speed and quickness of the creature, it is the Difficulty of the Initiative roll of the player characters.

Other Capacities. In this catch-all category we put all the other abilities of the creature.

Keywords. The Keywords used by the creatures, including those of their gear. Creatures' gear uses the same Keywords of the heroes, but effects which, for the heroes, trigger on a 6, in their case trigger on a 1 on the Fate Die of a defending hero. In addition, they can use a number of special NPC-only Keywords, detailed below.

Description. A physical description of the character, if necessary.

Lore. A legend, or some piece of reserved info the Storyteller can use for inspiration (it can be true or false). Usually the heroes, to know it, must have a suitable Concept and/or make a REA+PRE roll.

Other Special Abilities. Unique capacities of the creature (which cannot be reproduced with a Keyword).

Example NPC Table

LVL	CREATURE OR NON-PLAYER CHARACTER
1	Beggar, Small Monkey
2	Innkeeper, Street Thug
3	Desert Bandit, Wolf
4	Fire Jackal, Ghul
5	Ashashin, Caliph Guard
6	Magus, Lamassu
7	Manticore, Mummy
8	Djinn, Phoenix
9	Genie, Roc
10	Dragon, King of Efreets

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Opponents Keywords

In this table are described the keywords used exclusively by NPCs. They work as the Gear Keywords, but aren't necessarily linked to equipment.

Opponent's Keywords don't have a cost like Gear Keywords.

Opponents Keywords Table

KEYWORD	EFFECT
Attrition X	After a round of combat with this creature, any enemy engaged with it suffers X damage (which can be reduced by normal effects). This in addition to any damage caused during combat.
Example. A phoenix is surrounded by a halo of fire, dealing 2 damage at the end of the round to everyone engaged with her (creatures immune to fire obviously suffer no damage)	
Charge X	The creature attacks at LvL+X if it moved at least a Zone. This Keyword is assigned to creature capable of trampling, charging, and so on.
Fly	The creature can fly, ignoring any obstacle to its movement.
Immunity (specific)	The creature cannot be damaged (but can, at the Storyteller's discretion, be Hindered) by a specific type of attack.
Leader	This creature inspires others, granting +1 Difficulty in attack to all their allies present in the scene.
Mobility	The creature is very fast. It can move one extra Zone per turn as a free action.
Multi Attack X	The creature can make X attacks per round, against different (or even the same) target. Unless differently specified, the attack is always the same, but certain creatures can make different attacks forms with each multi attack.
Paralysis	Each Effect spent by this creature when attacking, instead of causing damage, Paralyzes the victim. A paralyzed hero suffers +1 to the Difficulty of their physical tests (like Hinder), but the penalty disappears only when a particular condition triggers.
Example. Baxtak has a paralyzing attack which lasts while the monster is on the chest of the victim. The creature attacks a hero, causing 3 effects. The victim suffers +3 to the Difficulty of their actions until they manage to get the monster off their chest.	
Poison	This creature has one or more attack forms which cause poisoning (see Poison and Diseases). By default, the effect is that of a Generic Poison.
Undead	Undead are immune to poisons, diseases, and bleeding, but they are (obviously) supernatural creatures, and this make them vulnerable to certain spells and powers.
Weakness	This creature is particularly vulnerable to a specific form of attack, which deals +1 Damage if the attacks uses at least one Effect to cause damage.

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Creatures

ASHASHIN	LVL 4
Attack: 5; **Initiative:** 5	
Keywords:	Dangerous
Description:	These black dressed humans are fanatical killers under the orders of Hassan-I Sabbah, the Old One of the Mountain. They are taken as infants from their families and trained for only one thing: to kill. They are skilled in every form of combat, including archery and horsemanship, disguise and poison use. Being marked as a target by the Ashashins is a real death sentences: these people won't stop until their quarry is dead.
Lore:	The widespread story of the Ashashins using hashish is false. Ashashins are religious fanatics, and their discipline forbids the use of any drug, which might affect their capacities. The truth is that they don't fear death, which makes them capable of actions no sane person would even try, knowing their survival chances are non-existent. Ashashins believe that they are destined for paradise in the next world, so they assign so little value to their mortal lives. There are tales... tales that in the fortress of Alamut, during the reign of Hassan-I Sabbah, there was a garden of pleasures so great that Ashashins would do anything, including risking their lives, for the privilege of living there.

BANDIT	LVL 2
Keywords:	-
Description:	Bandits, also known as robbers, are the scourge of the wildlands and the deserts of the caliphate, as old Ali Baba can tell you. These godless men are merciless assassins, ready to kill you for the dinars you have in your purse. They are usually armed with scimitars, daggers, and, sometimes bows. Bandit bands are guided by Bandit Leaders (LvL 4), and in some cases, they serve evil Mages or other villains.
Lore:	Being enemies of everyone who is just, in many areas there are bounties on bandits, usually paid for their heads. For the same reason, many bandits don't have an easy way to spend their ill-gotten loot, and they keep it in secrets hideouts, like the one of the famous Forty Robbers. They tend to be very well concealed, and protected by guards and traps, but a hero managing to plunder one of them will probably be wealthy for the rest of their life (see sidebar).

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Storyteller's Tip: Bandits Secret Hideout

If you want to have an idea of where the treasure of a robber band is, roll a die and check the table below.

D	TREASURE LOCATION
1	**Robbed!** Someone stole their loot! They are very angry, and are looking for it.
2	**No Treasure.** They are too poor to have one.
3	**Cavern, Tomb, Sewer.** Their loot is hidden in a cavern, perhaps protected by some monster or trap.
4	**Castle or House.** The bandits have a fortress of some type: a fortified house, or even a real fortress, where they keep their ill-gotten gains.
5	**Magician!** The bandits have a sorcerer of some sort with them (maybe he is also the band's chief), so their loot is protected by some powerful incantation (an illusion, an enslaved monster, or so on).
6	**Ally Beyond Suspicion.** The bandits are in league with someone you would never think of, that provides them a very peculiar hideout for them and their loot (a powerful merchant lends them their warehouse or ship, a city guard captain hides them among the guards and keeps the loot in the city's coffers, and so on).

BAXTAK	LVL 4
Keywords:	Paralysis (while on the chest of the victim), Attrition 1 (only when on the chest of the victim)
Description:	The Baxtak, also known as the Night Hag, is an evil spirit. A little larger than a boy, with a pointed nose and long fingered, bony hands. Baxtak can become invisible (LvL 6 to spot them, the Revelation spell works fine). They are very dangerous, because they hunt using the *karabasan*, the sleep paralysis. During night time, they creep into the bedchambers of people, looking for persons laying down, whether they are sleeping or not. When they find one, they jump onto the victim's chest, draining his life force (LvL 5 paralyzing attack, resisted with PAS+COU). The victim has the impression of being strangled, and is incapable of moving.
Lore:	The only way to interrupt the *karabasan* is wiggling the creature's fingers (PRE+COU). Baxtak have a weakness, their nose: grabbing it (COU+PRE) causes the Baxtak to immediately surrender, and the creature is ready to pay for its freedom by revealing the location of one hidden treasure.

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CANNIBAL	LVL 2
Attack: 3	
Keywords:	-
Description:	The habit of eating human beings is reported in savage populations living in the most remote islands of the southern seas, at least if you pay heed to the reports of notorious liars such as Sinbad the Sailor. Sadly, it also happened historically, in periods of dire famine, when the poorest persons of the caliphate resorted to the habit of eating dead (or not quite dead!) persons. Savage cannibals are armed with rough spears, knives, and stone axes, while civilized ones are far more vicious. Cannibals are frenzied from the idea of eating human flesh, so they have a higher attack.
Lore:	The act of eating another man corrupts the soul of a person, regardless of the reason for such a decision. For this reason, cannibalism is a ritual of several unholy cults. In addition, there are stories (confirmed by the knowledge of ghul hunters) that eating human meat is a way to become a ghul. So yes, death is a better choice than eating the flesh of a fellow human being.

CULTIST	LVL 1-2
Attack: 5; **Initiative:** 5	
Keywords:	-
Description:	Followers of ancient, forbidden cults, these people are fanatics. Some of them incarnate the typical cliché of the genre: black robed, shrouded, and armed with long, pointed daggers, while others are persons above suspicion. Certain cults also employ the services of cultist guards, big burly fellows (LvL 3, armed with Vicious scimitars).
Lore:	Cultists are fanatically loyal to their cult master (LvL 5), a very charismatic person capable of keeping the cult under control by his or her steely will. Often the cult master is a mage of some sort (give them a couple of spells plus a magical item of some sort, like the Snake Staff). For cult masters really versed in magic, you can use the Magus profile. Cultists worship a divinity or other supernatural being of some sort (like a dead pharaoh, a powerful djinn, or something similar). The cult master, at the discretion of the Storyteller, can have the ability to summon a supernatural creature of some sort, although the "creature" may only be a powerful illusion or a clever ruse.

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DIV	LVL 3-6
Life: LvL+2	
Keywords:	**Dangerous, Reach** (due to their large weapons)
Description:	Divs are the Arabian Nights equivalent of ogres. They exist in many forms and shapes, but there are some general concepts which can be applied to all of them: they are big (up to fifteen feet tall), with long fangs, and absolutely vicious (and cannibals). Unlike other supernatural monsters, they are very fond of metal, even if they don't know how to work it, so they usually fight with long clubs and occasionally throw boulders (add the **Ranged** Keyword). Some Div have two heads, and can be dangerous foes if they agree on things (LvL+1 and can do two actions per round), or a poor blockhead if the two heads are in disagreement (-2 LvL to be fooled).
Lore:	There are a number of stories about Div, some true and some false. One says that a defeated Div can be enslaved. To do so, a character must reduce the creature to zero Life, then force it to surrender (with a POW+PAS, LvL+1 roll). If successful, the Div must be immediately chained with a symbolic element of some sort (for example a collar, a ring, or something similar). As long as the Div wears this item (which it cannot remove from itself or from another Div), it is forced to serve its master. Another tale says that Div kidnap young virgins, to sleep on their lap. They can sleep in that way for several days, but if the girl moves in any manner, the Div wakes up. Finally, there are stories that some Div (the higher LvL ones) store their souls in some kind of vessel, which they hide somewhere. Until the soul is detached from the Div, it cannot die, and has the Immunity (all type of damages) Keyword until the vessel is found and destroyed.

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EFREET — LVL 9

Keywords:	**Attrition 1** (fire sword), **Immunity** (non-magical weapons), **Fly**, **Ranged** + **Reach** (fireball)
Description:	Efreets are the evil counterpart of genies (see below). While genies are basically neutral or good toward mortals, efreets hate them deeply. Their true nature is debated: according to some they are the spirits of the dead ones, while for others they are immortal souls made of flame, tormented by their own nature. Efreet can assume any shape, but their favorite one is that of a tall muscular person, with black or red skin, and eyes burning like flame. They are often armed with scimitars of shining metal, which they can cause to burst into flame at will (thus their **Attrition** Keyword), and can, at will, shoot a terrible fireball (consider it a Ranged Attack with the **Reach** Keyword).
Lore:	Efreets behave in very similar ways to genies, and have a similar array of powers (see Genies Powers Table), but being devoted to evil, they try to cause as much harm they can, interpreting literally the requests of their masters. On this topic, efreets will cooperate willing only with evil people, trying to get free from good masters. The ultimate goal of an efreet, apart from causing mayhem, is capturing the souls of mortals, which they carry with them down into the supernatural kingdom where they come from.

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FIRE JACKAL	LVL 4
KEYWORDS:	LETHAL (fire damage), IMMUNITY (non-magical weapons and fire), UNDEAD
DESCRIPTION:	These beasts are emaciated jackals, clearly dead, but animated by an inner fire, which is clearly visible in the eyes and the mouth, from where the flames spread. Once very rare and solitary, after the sleep of Scheherazade, they are much more common, and have started appearing in packs, terrorizing remote villages and caravan routes. Luckily, they appear only by night.
LORE:	Stories say that Fire Jackals are the souls of persons who died of thirst and hunger in the desert, but it cannot be true, otherwise there would be many more of them! Hakims think that they are sinning spirits, because they cannot touch (and are wounded by) the blood of a true innocent, which is the only thing that can harm them, apart from magical weapons. Whatever their origin, it is said that the heart of a Fire Jackal burns forever. When a Fire Jackal is reduced to zero Life, roll a Fate Die: on a 1-5 it explodes in a fiery ball of fire (an area attack in the Zone where it is), while on a 6, it collapses, releasing its fire heart, which appears like a piece of lukewarm coal. The stone can be kept and used, spending one Energy point, to make it burst into flames (if used with the Fire Mastery spell, it reduces by 1 the Difficulty of attacks). But, if the stories are true, the spirit of the Jackal will return every night to torment the owner of his heart, because the organ is also the key to releasing the soul of the Jackal.

TRAPS

Monsters are a typical threat which adventurers face, but they aren't the only one. Forbidden tombs, bandit lairs, and magi's sancta sanctorum are often protected by traps.
Ruleswise, remember that traps aren't intended as "character killers": their goal is to be an obstacle for the players to avoid using their wits.
Traps exist in many forms, and each Storyteller should devise their own, but if you are in a hurry (or need some inspiration), roll the Fate Die and check the table in the next page..

FINDING TRAPS. Many game systems use rolls to determine whether heroes spot a trap. Scheherazade, instead, follows a different philosophy: if a player says they are looking for traps (and acting in a way that would lead to them finding it) they find it. Only in dubious cases should you roll, usually on PRE+CAU.

DISABLING TRAPS. Much like finding one, disabling a trap should be an effect of the players' ingenuity, not a simple dice roll. In dubious cases, if a rules solution is needed, roll on PRE+REA.

TRAP LETHALITY. Traps usually attack at LvL 3-6.

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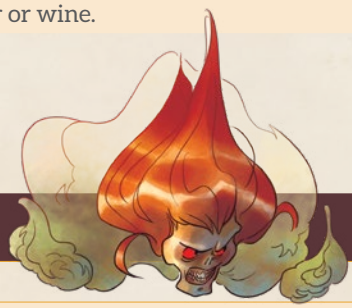
Traps Table

D	RESULT
1	**Spikes/Blades/Pendulum.** A mechanical trap, usually triggered by a pressure plate on the floor or a trip wire. When the trap is triggered, a blade or a spike springs out, cutting or impaling the victim with a DANGEROUS attack. Blades and spikes usually trigger only once, while a pendulum blade continues to oscillate for a long time (at least a Fate Die worth of rounds).
2	**Pit or Obstacle.** Pits can be dangerous if concealed, because a character can fall into them (consider this a Medium height fall, VICIOUS if there are spikes at the bottom). In certain cases, pits are full of snakes, scorpions, or there is some device which fills them with water. Once revealed, a pit becomes an obstacle to be passed in some creative way.
3	**Alarm.** A particular type of trap which doesn't harm but alerts the guardians of the place in some way: for example, a wire triggering a gong, a light snuffing out, or something similar.
4	**Gas.** A very insidious trap, triggered by a pressure plate or similar, which releases a gas with some effect (hallucinogen, sleeping gas, or similar).
5	**Sliding Wall.** This particular type of trap is designed to split the party, or to lock it forever in some place. Usually, there is a concealed control to reset it.
6	**Poison-coated Item.** A light layer of poisonous substance placed over a precious item. It can be cleared away with water or wine.



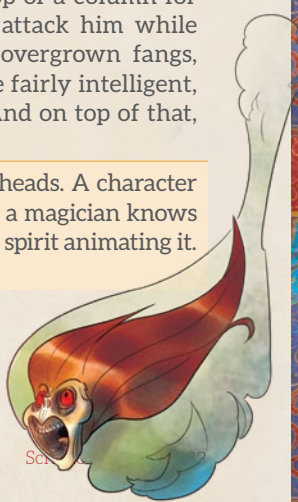
FLYING HEAD — LVL 3

Defense: 4; **Initiative:** 4; **Life:** 6

KEYWORDS: UNDEAD, FLY, POISON (Day: +1 Difficulty to physical tasks due weakness)

DESCRIPTION: The magi know the forbidden rituals to bind an evil spirit into an embalmed head, severed from the corpse. Probably this art is far older, coming from the ancient embalmers of Egypt. Despite their origin, these creatures are deadly guardians: they can lay unseen on some shelf or on the top of a column for centuries but, when an enemy comes near, levitate and attack him while shrieking horribly. Their mouths are strong and full of overgrown fangs, drooling a poisonous saliva with sickening effects. They are fairly intelligent, and animated by a deep hatred toward any living being. And on top of that, they are very agile and gifted with unnatural energy.

LORE: The magic animating a flying head is the glyph on their foreheads. A character learned in the ways of fighting undead (like a ghul hunter) or a magician knows this. Hitting the glyph (Difficulty +1) immediately banishes the spirit animating it.



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GENIE — LVL 8

Keywords:	Immunity (non-magical weapons), Fly
Description:	This particular djinn is a typical genie, the one you can find in a bottle, a lamp, or bound to an ancient tower. It can fly, fight on behalf of its master (usually with a scimitar or something similar), disappear in a puff of smoke and, obviously, fulfill wishes (see below).
Lore:	Fighting a Genie is a very bad idea, unless you have some Blessed Date Stones (see Magical Items). The best thing to do when you find such a creature is to try and parley, make a deal with its master, or, if you are very lucky, find a way to control it. Genies can grant wishes, but their powers always have a limitation of some sort. You can invent your genie, or be inspired by the table in the next page.

GUARD — LVL 1-4

Keywords:	Protection 1-3
Description:	The typical palace guard or a soldier of a noble. They vary widely in skill from LvL 1 (peasant guards or little more) to LvL 4 (the Caliph's personal guard). Usually they are armored, but their weapons aren't particularly good. Guards are usually led by an officer one or two LvL higher than their troops.
Lore:	There is no particular lore on guards, they are boring people, apart from when they become adventurers.

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GENIES POWERS TABLE

This table gives you some ideas to personalize your genie. Use the results as guidelines to create your own unique supernatural servant.

Wishes. If there is a number in this column, the Genie will fulfill the number of wishes required, and then be free from the obligation. If there is the word "control", it means that the genie will obey its master's will until a condition is met (for example, until the master owns the genie's lamp).

What a Genie Can Really Do. The quick answer is basically anything, apart from its specific limitations. It can conjure things out of thin air, fly, shape change, and so on. The only things every genie is forbidden to do are meddling with time and with the free will of humans (it cannot enslave a mortal, or make a princess love you). As a rule of thumb, consider all the effects of its magic as being cast at its LvL (so a wall of fire conjured by a LvL 8 genie will be an obstacle of LvL 8, and so on).

Fulfilling Conditions. When a genie fulfills the condition, it usually disappears.

Freeing a Genie. If, for some reason, a genie is set free (which is different from Fulfilling its Condition), it may react in unpredictable ways. Roll the Fate Die: on a 1, it will remain to cause mayhem, on a 6, it will remain to help mortals, while on any other number, it will disappear.

D66	LIMITATION	WISHES
11-13	**No Wishes!** This genie has no power! Maybe it lost them in some way and needs help to recover them, or maybe it is simply a very weak Genie.	-
14-16	**Illusion.** This genie can fulfill any desire its master wants, but can only create illusions.	Control
21-23	**Cannot Cause Harm.** This genie cannot harm anybody.	3
24-26	**Cannot Influence a Specific Gender.** This genie's power cannot affect a person of a specific sex (roll the Fate Die: even for male, odd for female).	3
31-33	**Item Bound.** This Genie obeys the owner of a specific item (a lamp, ring, and so on).	Control
34-36	**Place Bound.** This genie cannot leave a specific place.	Control
41-43	**Lie or Truth Bound.** Roll the Fate Die: if odd, the genie tells only falsehoods, if even, it tells only truth.	Control (can only grant info)
44-46	**Opposite.** The genie does the opposite of what is asked.	3
51-53	**Payment.** The genie asks for a payment of some sort for any task it accomplishes.	Control
54-56	**Nemesis.** The genie has an enemy of some sort, of comparable power (for example, an efreet).	Control
61-63	**Goal.** The genie has a specific objective it wants to achieve (destroy a city, build a palace, make someone caliph), when it accomplishes its goal, it disappears.	3
64-66	**Master.** This genie is already bound to a master, through a pact. If the master dies, the genie disappears.	-

William Kvam (Order #30631634)

GHUL	LVL 3
Initiative: 4	
Keywords:	**Protection 2, Undead**
Description:	Ghuls are undead creatures, infesting mainly, but not exclusively, graveyards. They eat human flesh (of which graveyards abound), but when it is missing, they become dangerous hunters, preying on the living. Gray skinned and horrible, they are very fast, and their body is covered by a gummy skin protecting them from the majority of weapons. Even killing them isn't easy: a defeated Ghul comes back to life the night after it "dies", unless it is beheaded or burned.
Lore:	Ghul hunters know very well this type of monster, and over the years they have gathered some knowledge about them. Ghuls are in great part males, and not very bright (so they are forced into service by evil mages and such). The rare females, called "Ghulah", are different and much more dangerous (LvL 6): first, they are very sly, second, they can alter their appearance, with an illusionary magic which can make them appear like normal (or even very beautiful) women. They use this power to lure men into their houses to devour them, or to infiltrate themselves into position of power.

Storyteller's Tip: The Legend of Mother Ghula

Stories say that the most powerful ghul is "Mother Ghulah" (sometimes referred to as "Aunt Ghulah"), the eldest of her kind, who originated all of the sub-species. Mother Ghulah is hundreds years old, and along with the typical ghul powers, has many others, including that of shapeshifting into a hyena. Second, the legend states that she was the first ghul, because she touched a heavenly sphere fallen to earth (probably a star), which was forbidden by God for humans to touch.

Becoming a Ghul. A person killed by a ghul, but not entirely devoured, can become a ghul a week after death (roll the Fate Die: it becomes a ghul on a 1). The same could happen to someone feeding (willingly or not) on human flesh. Certain ghuls, in fact, capture humans and force them to eat corpses to create others of their own kind.

William Kvam (Order #30634634)

HIMANTOPODE	LVL 4
(**Attack and Defense:** 1 without a mount)	
KEYWORDS:	**PROTECTION 2** (only on the tentacles)
DESCRIPTION:	Also known as "davalpa", the himantopode, one of the strangest creatures of the Arabian Nights, usually appears as an old man or woman, so weak and feeble that they cannot walk. They are usually found along a path, or by a river side, where they beg to be carried to the other side. When a himantopode is carried on the shoulders of a person, its real nature is revealed: its legs (which are only illusory) are in truth long tentacles, which the monster uses to grapple the neck of its victim, who must make a POW+COU (LvL 6) test. If the victim fails, they are entrapped by the himantopode, which uses them as a mount, to move around, and as a slave to do errands, without ever leaving the victim's back. If the monster wants, at any moment it can make a POW+COU attack on its "mount", dealing Hinder to further subdue its victim. A himantopode on a mount can move two Zones per round, while one without cannot move, and is almost helpless.
LORE:	The preferred tactic of himantopodes is guile: they ask to be carried, but in some cases, they are found in trees, from where they jump onto the back of their victims (+2 Difficulty to the defense roll, due to surprise). A character found alone by a Himantopode is in real trouble, the monster maintains its grasp even when sleeping, and the character must find a way to fool it (for example, getting it drunk, throwing himself into fire or water, or something similar). If a Himantopode captures a person in a group, the first thing it does is try to separate the mount from their companions, making them run away.

SAGARTOI: THE REAL HIMANTOPODES

Despite many people claiming to have met himantopodes, including Sinbad the Sailor, nobody knows if these creatures really exist. The origin of the legend is probably more prosaic. The myth of the himantopodes derives from the Sagartoi, a mysterious tribe of bandit nomads, who use special lariats (**RANGED**, **PARALYSIS** – until breaks free with a POW+COU roll) to capture and subdue people, which they use as slaves or sell.

The Sagartoi hide somewhere in northern Persia, and are the descendants of a specialized troop of soldiers of King Xerses, who lived centuries ago.

They are LvL 3 opponents.

William Kvam (Order #3053454)

Lamassu Blessings

We could give you a table with precise rules for defining the effect of the blessings of a Lamassu, but we won't.
Magic in Scheherazade, should be, well... magical, so don't incapsulate it in a cold cage of numbers. Instead, let instinct and story sense guide you.
To help your job, we'll give some example blessings you can have an NPC Lamassu bestow on a hero.

- "May your legs be strong and your footing firm."
- "May your shadow shun darkness and your hope warm the night."
- "May your fireplace be ever warm."
- "By my name and power, I bless you with strength and courage."
- "By the stars and the sun, I bless you with hope and clarity."

LAMASSU	**LVL 6**
Life: 10	
Keywords:	**Fly**
Description:	Lamassu are creatures with the body of a bull and the torso of a man, usually bearded, sometimes also with large wings. In the ancient ruins of the Assyrian era, there can be found statues of them, in couples, guarding the entrances to temples and palaces. They are very big (up to 12 feet tall), and are considered protective demigods. In *Scheherazade*, Lamassu actually exist, and are an almost extinct, virtually immortal race bound to protect ancient places by virtue of age-old pacts they made. Despite their size, they are very good at hiding (LvL 7), and if they don't want to be seen, they aren't.
Lore:	Lamassu are capable of bestowing blessings, which can protect a person or a place from harm, or prolong their life. There are even stories about their capacity to confer immortality, but these are very old and without any confirmation apart from ancient engravings in the city of Ur. There is also a curious story about the mysterious fifth leg of the Lamassu. If you look at certain statues, in fact these creatures have five legs, but when really seen they have only four. The truth is that the fifth leg of the Lamassu is their weapon, a wooden club carved to resemble a leg, which they usually keep invisible. Sometime they gift (or lend) such a weapon to heroes in need of it (see page 117).

William Kwan (Order #5053545431)

MAGUS	LVL 3-6
Energy: LvL+2.	
KEYWORDS:	
DESCRIPTION:	The term "magi" refers to the priests of Zoroaster, but the term is used in a loose way to refer to any type of mage or warlock. This profile can be used both for good and evil mages. Rules-wise, a magus has access to a number of spells (equal to his LvL), to be chosen from the list of Common Spells and Rare spells. Spells are powered by Energy as usual.
LORE:	The greatest asset of a magus is their knowledge, and they can be a great source of lore, usually jealously kept in old scrolls, libraries, or simply in their mind. In addition, many mages have a special asset, usually a magical item of some sort. The Storyteller should invent one, or roll on the Magus Asset Table.

William Kwan (Order #3053454)

Magus Asset Table

D	EFFECT
1	**Servant**. The magus has a supernatural ally of some sort under their orders.
	Examples. A ghul, a fire jackal, a genie.
2	**Potion Master.** The magus is a master of alchemy and has a number of one-use devices equal to half their LvL.
	Examples. Dust of disappearance (make them invisible when thrown), love philter (make the imbiber fall in love with the first person they see), potion of shape change (turns imbiber into another creature for a scene or permanently), philosopher's stone (transforms an item touched into gold).
3	**Source of Power**. The magus has a hidden source of power, which grants him +3 Energy.
	Examples. An ancient Egyptian amulet, a well of power in his laboratory.
4	**Secret Lore**. The magus has a library or some other way to acquire knowledge which they can use to further their goals (spending 1 Energy).
	Examples. The magus can spy on their enemies in the fire, owns a magical mirror which knows the answer to any riddle in the world, knows the words to command the mummies of the pyramids.
5	**Magical Implement.** The magus has a magical item which increase their powers.
	Examples. A wand which shoots a fiery blast (a Ranged attack at LvL+1), a ring which conjures a magical shield (Ablative 2), a staff which summons a wall of fire (create a Danger Zone).
6	**Immunity**. The magus has a special Immunity of a magical nature to some type of damage. Usually, there is a way to bypass or eliminate the Immunity.
	Example. The magus is immune to all weapons, because they moved their soul into a bottle, hidden on the bottom of a lake. Upon opening the bottle, the soul goes back to the magus, which loses his immunity.

William Kwan (Order #5053145)

MANTICORE — LVL 7

Attack (Bite): 7; **Attack (Stinger):** 5

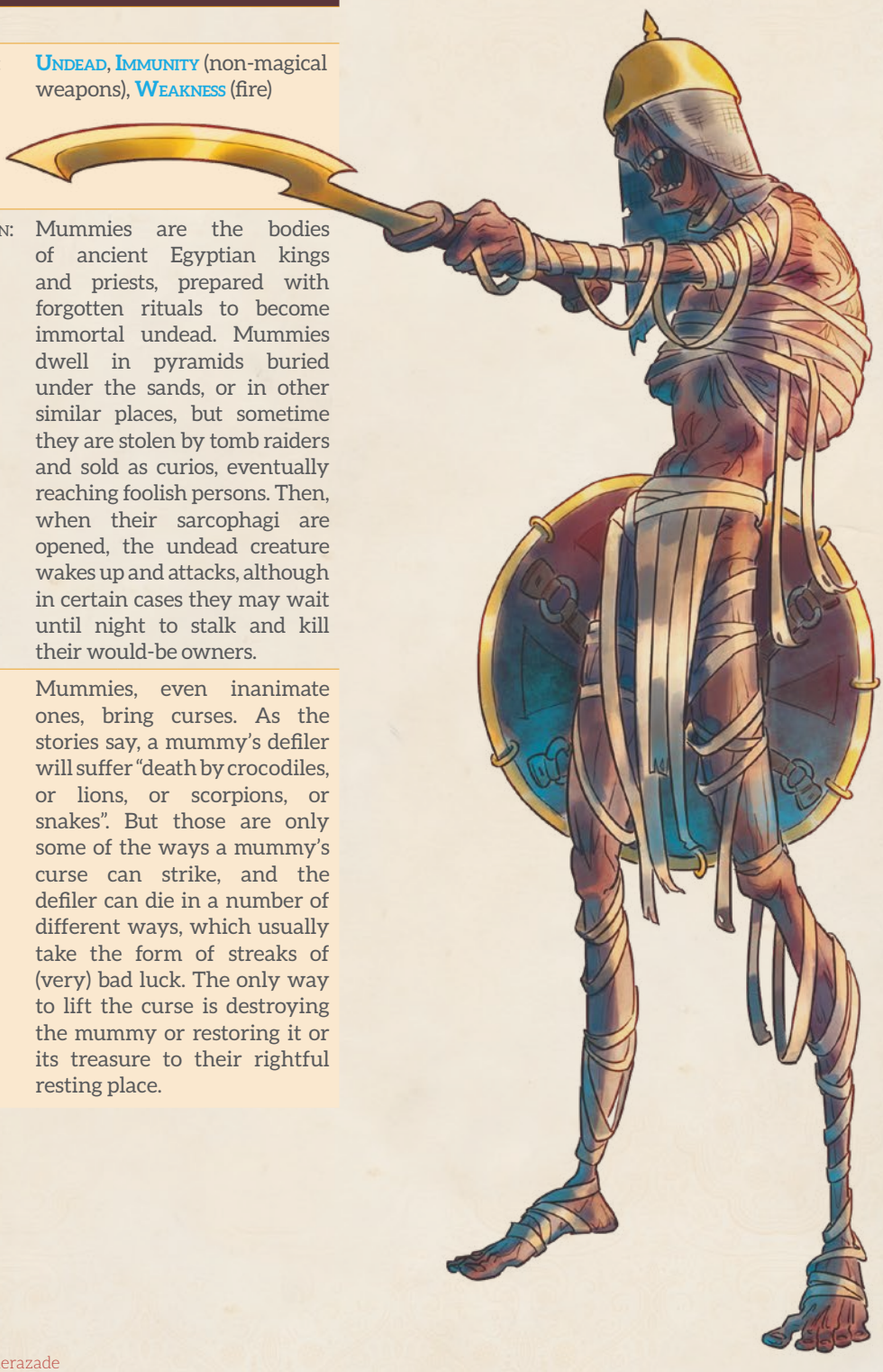
Keywords:	**Poison** (Scene: 1 Damage), **Multi Attack 2** (one bite and one poisoned stinger), **Ranged**
Description:	Manticores are one of the most dangerous and hideous creatures of the Caliphate. It has a lion's body, a human head (with a lion-like mane), and a long scorpion tail ending in a poisonous stinger. The tail is also covered in smaller spikes, which the beast can shoot at its enemies. Certain specimens also have bat wings and can fly, but these are very rare. Manticores are intelligent, capable of speaking, but absolutely evil: their name means literally "eater of men", and it describes them perfectly.
Lore:	Manticores are devious and evil, but have two weaknesses that make them more human. First, they love art, and almost all of them pursue a discipline, be it singing, poetry, painting, or whatever they can do (their lion paws are quite dexterous, and some manticore can play instruments). The problem is that they are absolutely awful at these activities, but are mortally offended if someone points it out (flattering their artistic capacity is a good way to survive the encounter with a manticore). They are also very fond of stories, and may accept a good tale in exchange for a service (or to spare the life of the teller).

MONKEY — LVL 1-5

Keywords:	
Description:	Monkeys and apes are relatively common in the caliphate. Rich people often keep small monkeys (LvL 1) as pets, while bigger ones can be found in jungles and the savannah (LvL 2-3). Monkeys are generally peaceful, but the chimpanzee and the fabled albino apes found on lost islands (LvL 4-5) are often ferocious, seeing humans as a source of food, or, may Allah protect us, as mates.
Lore:	Monkeys and apes can be trained: they are almost as smart as humans. Training a monkey requires some months (even years), but once you do it, you'll have a faithful servant. To train a monkey (not a hostile one, of course), you must first befriend it (for example, offering it food), then, any trick you want to teach the monkey requires a REA+PAS roll, with a Difficulty equal to the monkey's LvL. Tricks are usually taught "off screen", a character can make a single attempt between each scenario.

William Kvam (Order #30631434)

MUMMY	LVL 5
Life: 8	
Keywords:	**Undead**, **Immunity** (non-magical weapons), **Weakness** (fire)
Description:	Mummies are the bodies of ancient Egyptian kings and priests, prepared with forgotten rituals to become immortal undead. Mummies dwell in pyramids buried under the sands, or in other similar places, but sometime they are stolen by tomb raiders and sold as curios, eventually reaching foolish persons. Then, when their sarcophagi are opened, the undead creature wakes up and attacks, although in certain cases they may wait until night to stalk and kill their would-be owners.
Lore:	Mummies, even inanimate ones, bring curses. As the stories say, a mummy's defiler will suffer "death by crocodiles, or lions, or scorpions, or snakes". But those are only some of the ways a mummy's curse can strike, and the defiler can die in a number of different ways, which usually take the form of streaks of (very) bad luck. The only way to lift the curse is destroying the mummy or restoring it or its treasure to their rightful resting place.



William Kwan (Order #5053545)

PERI	LVL 6
Keywords:	**Fly**, **Weakness** (iron)
Description:	Peri are incarnated spirits. They appear as winged women, gifted with supernatural beauty. A mortal staring into the face of a Peri must roll on REA+COU to avoid falling in love with them, this is the reason for which they often wear a veil. Peri are ambivalent: in general, they are good, but can be mischievous in certain cases, especially with those enamored of them. Peri can be harmed by weapons, but, even if killed, they return to life after three nights.
Lore:	Some Peri can change shape (as the Shape Change Rare Spell), but these stories are unconfirmed, as some of them can become invisible at will. What Peri really fear is iron, they are vulnerable to it, and an iron weapon can kill them forever. There are many tales of Peri entrapped in iron cages by evil sorcerers and viziers, in which these creatures are forced to sing for the delight of their captors. Despite the fact that there are a number of tales about men falling desperately in love with Peri, there are also some about the opposite: a Peri loving a mortal. These unions are always doomed to fail, because mortals and immortals aren't meant to stay together, but nevertheless, love is blind, and these relationships sometimes give birth to an offspring. These half-immortal people are gifted with supernatural powers. The most famous of them was the case of Bilquis, the mythical Queen of Sheba...

Storyteller's Tip: Using Monsters

In the majority of role-playing games, monsters are one thing only: enemies to fight and defeat.
In Scheherazade, this isn't always true: creatures, exactly like persons, have feelings, motivations, and ideas, and can (and should) be used in different ways than just being simple cannon fodder.

Talking with Monsters. If a creature can talk, it probably has something interesting to say. Some role-play and conversation can give the party information and hints which they cannot find in any other way. In the same way as humans, monsters can't always be trusted, and they could use words to sway the heroes.

Monsters as Friends and Allies. In the end, not every monster should be evil. For example, is the Roc attacking the city because the local prince stole her egg evil? Obviously not, it is only trying to protect its family. There could also be some individual monster which, although belonging to an evil race, isn't so evil at all: imagine a dim-witted, easily gullible Div, with a passion for sweets. It isn't evil at all, but he would do anything for a plate of cinnamon cookies.

Monsters are Alien. When interacting with monsters, remember that, despite the fact that they can look and behave like humans, in the majority of cases, they aren't, and they are following their own agenda and have their own motivations, but also follow their own rules. A ghul, for example, is craving for your flesh even when talking to you, and whatever it says is only a way to get its teeth closer to you, but if you manage to make it swear on something holy, it could be forced to obey the letter of the promise. Read accurately the Lore entry of each creature, and feel free to expand it, to make creatures more interesting.

William Kwan (Order #5053543)

William Kwan (Order #50594381)

ROC	LVL 5-9
KEYWORDS:	**FLY**, **VICIOUS** (beak and talons)
DESCRIPTION:	Rocs are giant sized raptors, which are reputed to live on unexplored islands of the Persian Gulf and in other remote areas. Their size is the stuff of legends, from the smallest ones with a six yard wingspan (LvL 5), to the enormous ones with a thirty or even forty yard wingspan (LvL 9).
LORE:	Roc are animals, very attracted by shimmering things, so often in their secluded nests (on the top of peaks) are found great treasures belonging to their previous victims (they are carnivores) and, more importantly, their eggs, which are very valuable (3 Treasure Points), because there is an unconfirmed legend which states that a roc obeys the first creature it sees when it hatches. The feathers of a roc are also quite valuable (1 Treasure Point), because they are covered in a thin gold-like powder which it is said it can cure any form of illness, including leprosy.

William Kwan (Order #50594381)

SKELETAL WARRIOR	LVL 2-4
Initiative: LvL+1	
Keywords:	Deflection or Protection 1 or Dangerous, Weakness (blunt weapons and the Holy Word spell)
Description:	There are several forms of magic, all evil, which can awaken the bones of a dead warrior to make them fight again. These skeletal creatures usually dwell in tombs, ancient palaces, and similar locations, and only obey their masters, who use them as guards and soldiers. They are armed with the same weapons and armor they had in life, thus the variety of Keywords suggested.
Lore:	Skeletal Warriors, as all undead, are particularly vulnerable to the name of the Almighty, and to blunt weapons. In addition, there are several ancient spells (see Rare Spells) which can be used against them. Sometimes the presence of a Skeletal Warrior can be linked to some type of curse or unfinished deed, which, if resolved, can free them from un-death.

Storyteller's Tip: More about Skeletal Warriors

Skeletal Warriors are excellent low-level enemies for the heroes, but with a few customizations, they can become really nasty.

Invulnerable Skeleton. Simply add the Immunity (weapons) Keyword to the skeleton. Regardless of how hard the heroes beat them, they cannot kill them, so they must find another, more creative way to get rid of them, for example, pushing them down a crevasse (with some Hindering), or closing them behind a stone door. When you put the characters in front of such an enemy, remember to include such elements in the combat Zones for them to make use of.

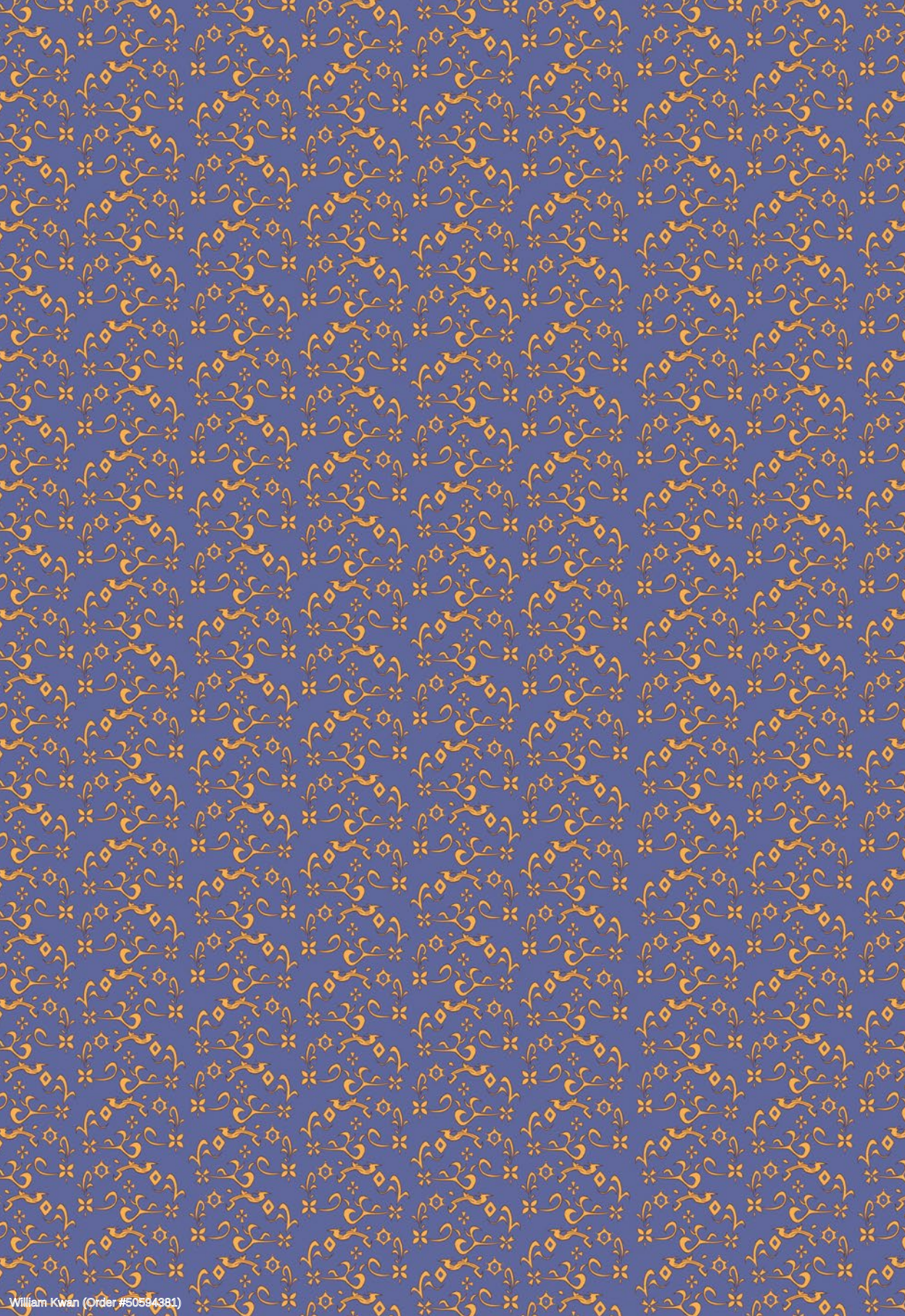
Recombining Skeletons. This customization applies to a group of skeleton warriors (usually 8 or more), for example, those found in an ossuary. These skeletons fight as normal, but, after at least two skeletons are destroyed, at the beginning of the next round, they meld into a unique, larger Skeleton (LvL equal to the sum of their levels). After the larger skeletons die, they meld together again, until you have four LvL 2 skeletons, then two LvL 4, and finally a giant LvL 8 Skeleton! Don't use the Group Enemies rule in this case. This type of skeleton is usually unarmed.

William Kwan (Order #5053545451)

SNAKE (CONSTRICTOR)	LVL 3
Life: 5	
Keywords:	Paralysis (constrict until the victim passes a POW+COU Test)
Description:	Pythons and giant snakes aren't very common in the caliphate, but can be found especially in the remote areas of India or on savage islands. They are sometimes used as treasure guards by evil magicians and cults. First, they constrict their prey with their coils (using the Paralysis Keyword), and then they crush them (a normal attack against the constricted victim).
Lore:	Snake charmers are fabled in their ability to enchant snakes, binding them to their will, but there are voices that claim that some snakes can actually hypnotize people with the power of their gaze! Consider it another use of the Paralysis Keyword, which can be resisted with COU+PAS, at LvL 4. Usually these snakes use their stare to soften up their opponents, before actually crushing them.

SNAKE (POISONOUS)	LVL 3
Initiative: 5	
Keywords:	Poison (Scene: 1 Damage)
Description:	The caliphate is in great part a desert area, so snakes are fairly common, especially in the places adventurers tend to visit: barren lands, old ruins, tombs, and so on. Every snake is different from the other, so it is impossible to stat every single species. Use this profile as a base (it represents a cobra), and modify it as you wish. Note that snakes are animals, and will usually attack only if threatened or if they have no chance to escape.
Lore:	If a poisonous snake bites you, you are in trouble. A skilled healer can try to stop it (REA+PRE, LvL 4), using the ancient technique of sucking and spitting away the poison. Note, this is a dangerous practice: if the healer rolls a 1 on the Fate Die, they will poison themselves. Another way to treat poison is with suitable herbs (they have a Cost of 1). Finally, snake charmers can cure snake poison with their saliva (because they become resistant to the venom). The problem is finding one nearby when necessary...

William Kwan (Order #5053543)


William Kwan (Order #50594381)

Adventure

William Kwan (Order #50594381)

The Story of the Goat, the Glutton, and the Shepherd

Better to eat with monkeys than with a glutton

-Ancient Jordanian Saying

The scenario presented in this chapter is an introductory adventure to get you familiar with the rules and the setting.

Parts in narrative text are meant to be read aloud or rephrased by the Storyteller, adapting them to the situation.

Adventure Background

There is a cavern, at the end of a ravine, somewhere west of the caravan trail, where a magical spring rises. Any mortal drinking the water from this spring is turned into a goat.

The cavern is the home of powerful Div, called Anftawil (Longnose), who adds to his herd the unfortunate souls transformed into goats. Only Anftawil can change a goat back to its original form by touching it three times on the head with his shepherd's staff, shaped like a ram's head. The cavern is sealed all year round, aside from the day of Nowruz, the solstice, when the boundaries between our world and that of the djinn are weak. Anftawil, during that day, leaves the cavern to bring out the herd to graze, and the spring remains unguarded.

This is the background to what happened yesterday evening, Nowruz's eve, to poor Halima.

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A young orphan girl living with her tyrannical uncle Abdul, and many older cousins, Halima must guard a small herd of goats. As with many girls of her age, Halima has the habit of daydreaming, and in the evening, she noticed a missing lamb. Fearing her uncle's rage, Halima went back into the wild to look for it in the falling night. The tracks of the stupid animal ended at the mouth a mysterious cavern which she had never seen before, deep in a ravine.

It was, obviously, the cavern of Anftawil, uninhabited because the Div had already gone out for his once a year grazing. The girl cautiously went inside, and discovered that the place was inhabited by someone, probably a shepherd himself. She wanted to look around, but found her lamb sleeping near a spring. She decided to pick it up and leave immediately, hoping to avoid a beating. But, being very thirsty, before going she drank some water from the spring.

The effect was immediate: Halima became a goat, and, terrified, ran away into the night. When she reached her uncle's house, it was at first light on Nowruz's day. She called loudly to uncle, but when the old man and cousins saw her, they believed her to be in front of an evil djinn, which, as everybody knows, roam free on Nowruz, and her uncle tried to kill her with a spear!

With no other options, Halima ran to the nearby village, chased by her zealous uncle and her cousins, determined to destroy the evil spirit...

Players' Hook

The characters are part of a caravan, which has stopped in the small village of Zuzaziz for a couple of days to rest and water the camels. Alternatively, they can be independent travelers who have decided to stop in the village because today is an important festival, Nowruz (see sidebar on next page), and nobody wants to pass it on the road.

Zuzaziz is placed on a trail somewhere north of Bagdad, but it can be easily repositioned in any other rocky area.

The Goat

Your caravan arrived in the village of Zuzaziz only this morning, and you have already seen most of it: two dozen houses gathered around the caravan road. Despite the simplicity, it is a welcome place to rest your bones and, hopefully, to pass a peaceful Nowruz.

But not everybody is prone to rest. The merchants of the caravan quickly unloaded their wares from the camels and improvised a small market in the plaza.

Now, at midday, they have attracted a small crowd of locals, men and women dressed in rough country clothing, interested in the wares and, obviously, curious to see the foreigners.

From a nearby building, probably a tavern, you hear some music, and smell the unmistakable smell of roasted meat.

Trouble at the Market. Let the heroes wander a little bit in the market and the inn. If they want to buy something, take the role of a merchant and haggle in highly dramatic tones. When everybody is in character, go on.

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Suddenly, the chatter of the market is interrupted: an animal runs wildly among the stalls, overturning a jar full of pomegranates. It is a small, piebald goat, obviously very frightened, and she is being chased by **seven burly Shepherds** (LvL 2) armed with staves and long knives. They all look fairly similar to each other, as if they belong to the same family.

The little beast hides behind your legs (point to a player) and, to your great surprise, she says, in a bleating but definitely human voice: "Pleeeeease, heeelp me!"

The leader of the shepherds, an old, toothless man with a fanatical stare shouts: "Stay away from that foul djinn! She stole the soul of our poor Halima, we must kill her!"

"I am not a goat, I am Halima!" the beast bleats.

The heroes have no other option than drawing weapons if they want to protect the talking goat. Four of the younger shepherds attack, while the older one, **Uncle Abdul** (LvL 3, Leader), and his two elder sons stay back, egging the younger ones on. Despite their rage, they aren't great warriors, and after taking a couple of blows, they retreat, hauling away any fallen comrades.

Zone Suggestions: market stalls, plaza entrance or exit, large clearing, crowded area, pile of wares, resting camels.

"Thrice cursed you are! But it doesn't end here! We'll kill that abomination!" the older one says, while his sons drag him away.

The Goat's Tale. Once the situation settles down, the heroes can talk with the goat. Halima, which is her name, hastily retells the heroes her tale as described above in the Background. She is a frightened, but very

Storyteller's Tip: Nowruz

Nowruz is the day of the solstice, which traditionally starts the Persian new year. It is a very special day, when the barrier between the mortal and immortal worlds is thin. For people, it is a time of festivity and joy, during which families gather together, and special meals are prepared. In Afghanistan, people prepare Haft Mewa (seven fruits) for Nowruz, a mixture of seven different dried fruits and nuts (such as raisins, Persian olives, pistachios, hazelnuts, prunes, walnuts, and almonds) served in syrup. This is what Alsharuh offers the party when they meet him.

William Kwan (Order #30834454)

determined girl: after all, she has grown up almost alone, apart from her tyrannical uncle and cousins.

The Good Samaritan. The heroes aren't the only ones hearing the talking goat's tale. A placid, middle-aged man, a well-dressed servant of foreign origin (he is an Egyptian) is nearby. He is carrying a number of sacks of food, with enough provisions for a battalion of soldiers.

"I am sorry to intrude, little one." He politely says, "I am Khufu, humble servant of Alsharuh the Wise. Unwillingly, I eavesdropped your story, and I believe you. During many years in the service of my master, I saw things even strangers than this. If someone can help you, he is the one."

Alsharuh ("glutton") the Wise, Khufu explains, is a magician, living not far away from the village. He is a wise and good man, who came to the countryside to find the peace he needs for his studies. The goat-girl is tempted by the offer, but also scared, because she fears mages, and asks the heroes to go with her.

The caravan will stop in the village until tomorrow, and Khufu assures the heroes that his master is very fond of hearing tales from travelers. He only asks them to help him with carrying the groceries.

Asking Around. If the heroes ask around in the village, they discover that Abdul and his family are shepherds with a not-so-clean reputation of also being half bandits. About Alsharuh, instead, there is a lot of curiosity, since he is a foreigner and a mage. He arrived in the area a couple of years ago, taking residence in a house not far away from the village. Nobody has ever seen him, because he never leaves his mansion, but his servant Khufu often visits the village to buy provisions.

The Glutton

The house of Alsharuh the Wise is an hour's trek from the village. It is a square building, a little ramshackle.

With a bow, Khufu invites you in, saying: "Master, I bring you guests for dinner."

Alsharuh the wise is a large, very fat man, with a long black moustache, dressed in elaborate robes. He receives you in a large, comfortable kitchen. A large tapestry hanging from the wall is the only remarkable thing about the room. Alsharuh is sitting at a kitchen table, eating raisins and almonds from a bowl.

"May the Almighty bless you." The mage welcomes you with deep, throaty voice.

Alsharuh loves to eat, and the kitchen is the main room of his house.

Immediately after greeting the heroes, the mage asks Khufu if he has bought the groceries for tonight's meal. After confirming that he has, he smiles, invites the party to sit, and offers some of the almonds he is eating, all in a very familiar way.

Khufu introduces the heroes and Halima, which leaves the mage amazed, because he hasn't ever seen a speaking goat.

After the situation is explained, Alsharuh orders Khufu to bring him the Book of Remarkable Things. The servant goes into the library and return with an old tome.

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The mage peers into it, until he finds a passage, then reads aloud:

"And be warned, the mortal man, to not enter in the cavern of Anftawil, the Shepherd Div, because he is wicked and cruel.

And be warned, the mortal man, to not drink from Anftawil's spring, because it turns mortals into goats for his herd.

If the mortal man is so foolish as to do it, be warned that only three licks of the Brown Ram can remove the curse from the mortal man.

But the mortal man must be quick, because the door to Anftawil's cavern opens only once per year during the Nowruz, when the shepherd brings his herd outside."

There is a last line of the Book of the Remarkable Things, which Alsharuh doesn't read (but the heroes can discover later if they get the book, in which case give them the handout on page 163):

"Finally, be warned, the mortal man, that Anftawil, the Long Nosed Div, has only one weak point: he cannot stand the smell of pepper."

All the characters (even if players don't) know what a "div" is: a sort of Persian ogre (see Opponents chapter). They exist in many forms and with various powers. This Anftawil fellow seems to be a very powerful one.

After the revelation, Halima is obviously very worried, while the mage looks calm: the situation is bad, but not hopeless. He suggests that the heroes sneak into the cavern and find the "Brown Ram", whatever it is, which should be able to make Halima a girl again. He also suggests that the heroes wait until night when the Div is outside, and he offers to craft a potion for them which will surely help them in case they meet Anftawil.

If the heroes agree, the mage smiles, and claps his hands.

"Wise choice, very wise, my friends. We must toast to the success of your mission. Khufu, please, bring us all a cup of the sweetest pomegranate juice, while I craft the charm. And we must discuss tonight's dinner, as well."

Because making the potion is a lengthy process, he asks a party member to tell a Story to him, which is the sole payment he demands for his help.

In the meantime, Khufu brings in the juice, which is very sweet.

Alsharuh starts mixing common cooking herbs in a mortar, while he orders Khufu to fill the cauldron with oil, because he has decided what he wants for the Nowruz dinner.

The servant obeys, with a smile.

Alsharuh's Plan. Despite his friendly attitude, Alsharuh isn't friendly at all: he is a pathologic glutton and a power-hungry (in many senses) wizard. He has decided to eat poor Halima tonight, to savor the meat of a talking goat. Khufu, who knows his master well, and is as wicked as he is, lured the party to the house for this very reason.

Any hero watching what Alsharuh is doing, will understand that he isn't concocting a potion, but preparing sauce for meat.

"You are correct." The fat mage says with a smile "Tonight, I'll eat goat. A talking goat!"

The juice was spiked with a sleeping drug (LvL 5, POW+COU). Every character who drank it and fails the test falls asleep.

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If one or more characters didn't drink, a fight erupt (see Battling the Mage below). If all the heroes are drugged or defeated, continue to the Imprisoned! Paragraph.

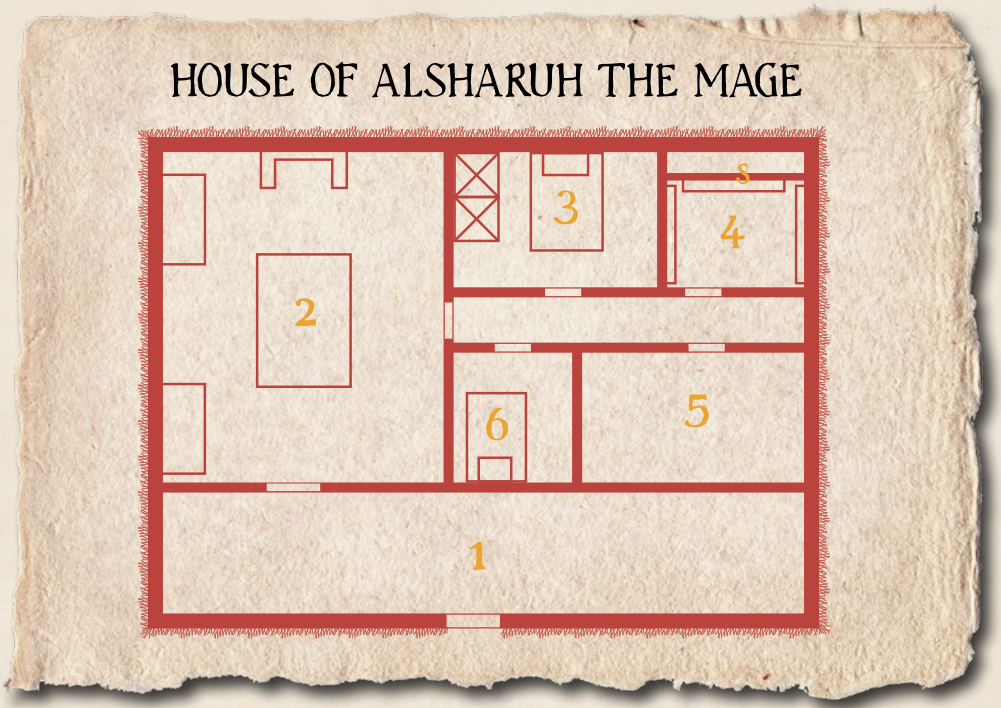
Imprisoned! Drugged heroes wake up an hour later, tied and bound. The drug is supposed to last longer, but Khafu used too little of it. They must free themselves from the ropes (LvL 3[3], PRE+CAU). More heroes can collaborate, biting the bounds of a friend. Once one of them is free, he can free the others without any roll. The heroes are in the Pantry. The mage and his assistant stole all their gear (apart very small items), and Halima isn't with them.

From this point on, they are on their own, they must escape (see Alsharuh's House below) and save the girl.

Alsharuh's House

1. Vestibule. A shady vestibule where guests leave their slippers and their cloaks (and their weapons, if they follow the normal courtesy).

2. Kitchen. This room is the most important of the house. A large fireplace occupies a good part of the north wall, with a shelf over it, full of spice jars. Among them there is a big container of pepper, while an unlabeled bottle contains poppy's milk (the drug used to poison the heroes), which can be identified with a REA+CAU, LvL 2 roll. There are still two doses of it. If the heroes are imprisoned, Khufu and Alsharuh are here, busy prepping everything to cook the goat-girl for dinner. Halima is kept in a small cage in the northwestern corner of the room, while the heroes' gear lays on a low table in the southwestern corner



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Relic: The Tapestry of the Glutton

This ancient tapestry, if you believe Alsharuh's words, represents his great-great-grandfather, Alsharuh the Sultan, famous for his great appetite. In fact, the tapestry represents a scene of a banquet, where an enormously fat sultan (vaguely resembling the mage) is eating meat from a long spit, surrounded by his courtesans. The tapestry is magical, and when Alsharuh casts an Illusion over it, the Illusionary Sultan comes out from the painting to serve him. In truth, any mage can use the Tapestry (which is very big and counts as three Heavy Items), provided he knows the Illusion spell.

Relic: The Book of Remarkable Things

This old leather-bound book was written by an ancient Sufi (a sage), and contains a lot of assorted lore on magical creatures and legends. It is considered a Tool when used to search or remember useful info on those topics (for example, to discover the Lore related to a particular monster). Given its bulk, it counts as a Heavy Item. If sold to a collector or a mage, it is worth 3 Treasure Points.
Note that the Book can also be an excellent plot device for the Storyteller to introduce them to new adventures: for example, it can contain references to obscure places and creatures, and maybe even an old map sewn into the back cover or magically hidden somewhere...

(unless they left it in the vestibule). Over them hangs the Tapestry of the Glutton (see sidebar). In the middle of the room there is a large table full of cooking supplies, a couple of large knives, and, abandoned on it, the Book of Remarkable Things (see sidebar).

3. Master Bedchamber. This room contains a large bed, an armoire full of robes large enough to accommodate the size of the mage, and few other things. In a corner there is also an engraved walking cane, which the mage uses when he must leave the house. It isn't magical, but it is worth one Treasure Point.

4. Small Library. This small room contains old tablets, scrolls, and books, randomly stacked on wooden bookshelves. There is nothing very interesting among them, but the northern bookshelf can be moved, revealing a small space with a lectern with a Sumerian clay tablet on it, which contain the Illusion spell (it can be learned by a Gifted character at the end of the adventure).

5. Servant Bedchamber. This poor room is where Khufu sleeps. It hosts a narrow bed, an armoire, and a stool. Inside the armoire, apart from some clothing, there is a small humanoid statue with the head of a hippo. It is an idol of the evil Egyptian god Metni (REA+CAU, LvL 3 to know this information, but only for character with a religious Concept).

6. Pantry. This cool, underground room is used to store provisions. There is some food and a lantern, plus a stool that can be used as an improvised weapon (with the Frail Keyword). Imprisoned

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heroes start here. The Pantry door is closed, but the lock is quite cheap (LvL 2, PRE+REA). A more accurate search uncovers an old hatchet buried and forgotten under a pile of dried palm leaves (a normal weapon).

Battling the Mage

Sooner or later, the heroes will need to attack the mage and his servant. This can potentially happen in two different situations.

If one or more of the heroes didn't drink the sleeping drug, the mage and his servant try to attack them, their goal is to knock them out (they wake up in the Pantry with 2 Life).

Otherwise, the heroes will face the evil pair after escaping from the Pantry. In this case, they will be without weapons (their gear is in area 1), but they will have the advantage of surprise.

When a fight erupts, Alsharuh's first action is to cast the Illusion spell, to wake up the Illusionary Sultan from the Tapestry of the Glutton (see sidebar). The creature emerges from the tapestry and attacks with the spit the round after.

Zones. Cauldron area, table in the center of the room, western wall with the gear and Halima, door to the vestibule, door to the corridor.

Consequence. Any consequence during the fight results in someone overturning the big cauldron of boiling oil, which creates a LvL 3 Danger in the Zone, which expands into a nearby zone at the beginning of the next round, until the room is all in flames. When this happens, the house collapses at the end of the next round, killing everybody still inside (hopefully the mage and his servant.)

ALSHARUH THE MAGE — **LVL 3**

Energy 4, Attack 2, Knows the Illusion spell

KHUFU — **LVL 3**

Attack 4, Armed with a Dangerous Curved Dagger

ILLUSIONARY SULTAN — **LVL 5**

Protection 2, he disappears if someone disbelieves him (REA+CAU) or if the Tapestry of the Glutton is destroyed

The Shepherd

In one manner or another, the party manages to escape from the mage's house with two useful pieces of information: first, that Halima must be saved quickly, because she has only today to break the curse, and second, a mysterious riddle:

"Only three licks of the Brown Ram can remove the curse from the mortal man."

The real meaning of the riddle will be clear only after they enter the Div's cave.

Getting to the Cavern. At this point, the party must reach, and very quickly, the cavern of Anftawil. Halima remembers the place, but having found it by chance during the night, and having run away in fear, she is not sure of the way.

She can easily go back to the place where she usually leads the goats, but from this point on, the heroes must follow her tracks (LvL 3, PRE+REA). If they succeed,

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they reach a ravine. At the bottom of it, they find the black mouth of a cavern.

If they fail the roll, Halima in the end finds the path, but she loses some time.

Exploring the Cavern. There is no sound coming from the cavern, and there is a clear set of tracks, belonging to a herd of goats and a big humanoid, going out from it, so it is probably empty now. The heroes have a limited time to explore the cavern before the Div comes back, the exact amount depends on how much time they lose during the day.

In game terms, they begin with one Exploration Token plus:

They didn't get captured by Alsharuh the Mage	+2 Tokens
They found the tracks to the cavern without Halima's aid	+1 Token
They didn't stop to rest	+1 Token

Only you, the Storyteller, knows about these Tokens. Remove one every time they explore a room. This means searching it extensively: simply passing through it doesn't count. Having a combat also takes time: remove a Token after four rounds of a fight.

When the party only has one Token left, Uncle Abdul comes (see A Nosy Uncle below).

When the party has zero Tokens left, Anftawil comes (see The Master Is Back! below).

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Anftawil's Cavern

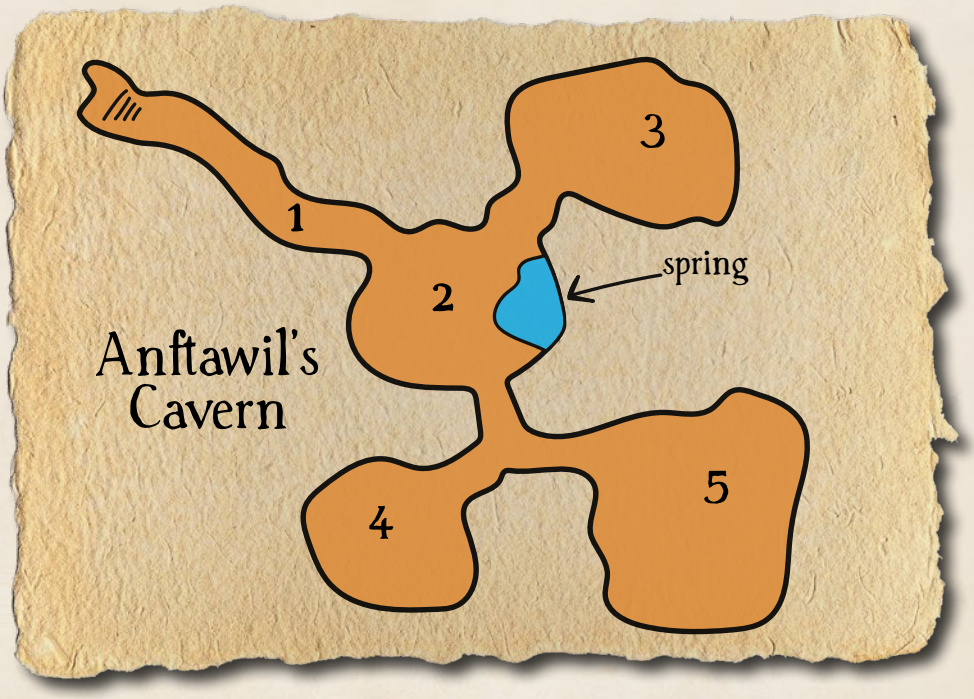
The cavern is generally in dim darkness, apart from areas where there is a fire lit. If the heroes don't have a source of light, they suffer +1 Difficulty to all tests where sight is involved.

1. Entrance. A snaking corridor dug into earth. There is nothing interesting here, and, unless the heroes dawdle for some reason, exploring this place doesn't reduce their Exploration Tokens.

2. Spring Room. A small spring sprouts from the eastern wall of this cavern, creating a small pool of fresh, clean water. This is the magical water from which Halima drank. Any character drinking from it will be immediately transformed into a goat (a LvL 2 creature), as the Shape Change Spell. The change is permanent, and only Anftawil's staff can dispel it (see below). The water, if taken, preserves its powers for exactly a year.

3. Sheepfold. Half of this cavern is used to store hay for the winter, while the other half is the real sheepfold, used to keep the goats. A shovel lays near it, while a thick layer of manure covers the flooring of fold. A coffer containing the treasure of the Div is buried under it. It contains jewels and gems worth 4 Treasure Points, and a magical amulet which grants -1 Difficulty versus mental affecting spells and powers. The treasure can be found only if a player explicitly searches the manure (hopefully using the shovel found nearby).

4. Store Room. The access to this room is barred by a door, which is locked. The key is on Anftawil's belt, but it can be picked fairly easily (LvL 2). Inside,



William Kwan (Order #W6954654)

there are a churn to make cheese, a large container of goat milk, and several wheels of cheese. The milk is fresh and good, but the cheese is really excellent and magical. A character eating a piece of it recovers one Life, two if they eat half a wheel, and will gain one permanent Life point if they eat a full one. But in this case, the magic of the cheese is so strong that the hero gains a strange physical feature, like a very long nose, goat ears, and so on (which can give a +1 to +2 penalty to social interactions). Both the changes and the extra Life are permanent.

5. Anftawil's Room. This is the place where Anftawil lives for the remainder of the year. A large fireplace stands in the middle, still lit, with a whole goat cooking on a spit. A large crude knife is stuck in a log, while in the northeastern niche of the wall is stored firewood for the winter. On the southern side of the room, there is a large pallet, covered with a foul-smelling blanket made of goat skins sewn together. If the heroes examine the knife, they find a word engraved on the hilt: "dabur" (wasp). If the knife is used to cut the meat, an amazing thing happens: the goat jumps away from the spit as if stung by wasps, and runs away madly (LvL 2). It doesn't attack, but consider any dice rolling 1 on the Attack roll of the heroes as causing a bad Consequence, things like spreading the fire around, knocking down the pile of firewood, trashing around the blanket, and so on. If the roast goat isn't attacked, have a player roll a single Fate Die per round to check for consequences. The only way to stop the thing is to remove the knife from it (LvL 4, COU+PRE). The knife is a Small weapon, but it is magical (and so can wound creatures with specific immunities).

A Nosy Uncle

The heroes' exploration is going to be interrupted.

Uncle Abdul Comes Back. Unless the heroes have killed all of Halima's cousins and her uncle, the girl's family shows up when the party has one Exploration Token left. One of the cousins followed them from when they left the village, visited Alsharuh house, and finally reached the cavern. Then the spy ran to call the rest of the family. When they meet the heroes, their attitude is clearly hostile, but this can be changed with some good role play: they are really curious about the cavern, because nobody, even Uncle Abdul, has ever seen it. Note that they still don't believe the goat is Halima, but if sufficient information is provided, they can be made at least dubious.

The Master is Back!

When there are no Exploration Tokens left, the feared moment happens: Anftawil comes back with his herd.

Thump! Thump!

You hear the heavy stomping of someone with enormous feet, followed by the familiar bleating of goats. And then you see it. Anftawil the Div is almost nine feet tall, with a deep blue skin, and a very long nose. He is dressed in goat skins, and holds a shepherd's staff in his hand. It is a curious thing, the top shaped like the head of a ram, with its tongue stuck out. He is surrounded by a dozen goats and a couple of fierce rams, one white and one black.

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Anftawil, thanks to his enormous nose, has an incredible sense of smell: unless the heroes rolled in the manure or are hidden under the goat blanket, he automatically knows that there are intruders in his house.

"Fe-fi-fo-fum! I smell the blood of mortals! Who is in my home?"

Anftawil is hostile, aside from any goats, which he tries to capture alive and keep in his herd. The heroes can try to fool him, but they must talk very fast to do it. At the moment, the monster is ravenous, and being quite bored with goat meat, will likely eat a piece of human meat or any suitable alternative: if the heroes have some delicacy from the mage's house with them, they can offer it to him, or they can try to persuade the creature to accept a story (but it must be a really good one) to free Halima (see below).

But if the party stole something from the cavern (he can smell it), the Div attacks immediately: his tactic consists of having his rams charge, while he strikes around with his mighty staff. He is very powerful, and impervious to non-magical weapons, but he is also sensitive to pepper, and using some on him lowers his Attack and Defense by 3 for three rounds.

Freeing Halima. The heroes came there for a reason: to free Halima from the curse, not to kill the Div (which could happen). The only thing which can return the girl to her former shape is touching her gently three times with the carved ram's head at the top of Anftawil's staff. Any person can do this, so, if the heroes can't convince the Div to do it, they can try to disarm him (a Hindering of three points is necessary, multiple characters can work together to accomplish this, summing up the number of Hindering points). Note that, once Halima is returned to her normal state, Abdul and his sons (after a round of stupor) will recognize their error and help the party.

Zones. Fireplace, stalactites, herd of goats, narrow corridor, slippery ground area, spring pool.

ANFTAWIL THE SHEPHERD	LVL 6
Energy: 8, Reach, Protection 2 versus non-magical weapons	

RAM	LVL 3
Charge 1	

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The Day is Ending...

Once the heroes get the staff or free Halima, they hear a cracking sound. It is the door of the cavern which is going to disappear! This means that the heroes must be really fast, running to the exit.

It is a LvL 3[3], COU+CAU action, which each hero must accomplish individually, chased by Anftawil, in 5 rounds or less. If one or more heroes fail the roll, the character with the most Complexity left is attacked by the Div (if multiple heroes failed and have the same Complexity left, pick the victim at random).

Heroes who after five rounds haven't yet finished the Complex Action are sealed in the cavern for a whole year...

...and This Story Too!

You pass through the cavern's entrance just in time! It seals behind you with a loud crack.

You fall on the ground, panting and puffing, under the stars of the second day of the new year.

The heroes (hopefully) did it, saving Halima and leaving the cavern before it was too late.

The rewards of this scenario are more emotional than practical: first, the satisfaction of accomplishing a good deed, second, they could see the reconciliation between Uncle Abdul and his niece. The old man begrudgingly thanks the heroes too, and invites them to a peace-making banquet at his house, based on goat meat, of course.

Apart from this, the characters may have found several interesting things during the adventure, in particular the Book of Remarkable Things, which could be useful later.

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And be warned, the mortal man, to not enter in the cavern of Anftawil, the Shepherd Div, because he is wicked and cruel.

And be warned, the mortal man, to not drink from Anftawil's spring, because it turns mortals into goats for his herd.

If the mortal man is so foolish as to do it, be warned that only three licks of the Brown Ram can remove the curse from the mortal man.

But the mortal man must be quick, because the door to Anftawil's cavern opens only once per year during the Nowruz, when the shepherd brings his herd outside.

Finally, be warned, the mortal man, that Anftawil, the Long Nosed Div, has only one weak point: he cannot stand the smell of pepper.

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Influences

"It is said some lives are linked across time. Connected by an ancient calling that echoes through the ages. Destiny."

-Prince of Persia 1

Role playing games are, by their nature, a derivative media. A number of books, movies, and videogames inspired me in the creation of Scheherazade. Maybe they can be useful for you too.

Fiction

- **A Bad Day for Ali Baba.** Craig Shaw Gardner
- **Captain Sinbad.** Graham Diamond
- **Cinnabar.** Graham Diamond
- **City of Brass.** S. A. Chakraborty
- **Desert of Souls.** Howard Andrew Jones

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- **Kingdom of Copper.** S. A. Chakraborty
- **Marrakesh Night.** Graham Diamond
- **Marrakesh.** Graham Diamond
- **New daring Tales of the Arabian Nights.** Graham Diamond
- **Samarkand.** Graham Diamond

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- **Scheherazade's Night Out.** Craig Shaw Gardner
- **Slaves of Sleep.** L. Ron Hubbard
- **The Bones of the Old Ones.** Howard Andrew Jones
- **The Djinn in the Nightingale's Eye.** A.S. Byatt
- **The One Thousand and One Nights.** Edited by Muhsin Mahdi
- **The Other Sinbad.** Craig Shaw Gardner
- **The Thief of Kalimar.** Graham Diamond
- **The Vizier's Second Daughter.** Robert F. Young
- **Throne of the Crescent Moon.** Saladin Ahmed
- **Vathek.** William Beckford
- **Waters of Eternity.** Howard Andrew Jones

Movies

- **Aladdin (1992)**
- **Alladin (2019)**
- **Aladdin II: The Return of Jafar (1994)**
- **Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time (2013)**
- **Sinbad: Legends of the Seven Sea (2003)**

Series

- **Arabian Nights (TV Miniseries) (2000)**

Video Games

- **Prince of Persia Series (1989-2010)**

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Scheherazade

THE ONE THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS RPG

NAME

CONCEPT

DESCRIPTION

STATUS

ATTRIBUTES

POWER

PRECISION

COURAGE

CAUTION

PASSION

REASON

SECONDARY ATTRIBUTES

LIFE

MOON

ENERGY

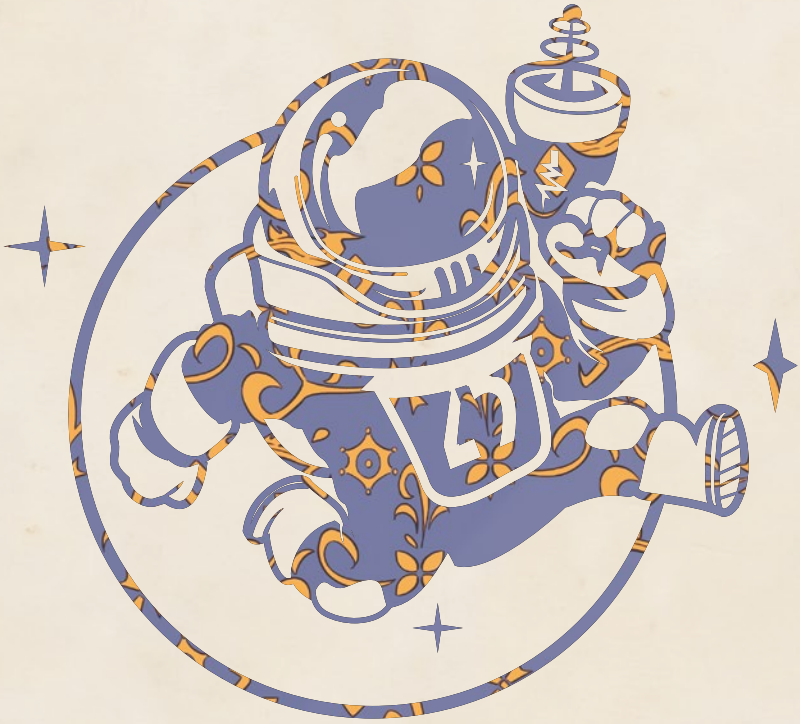
GEAR & NOTES

UNIQUE GIFT & SPELLS

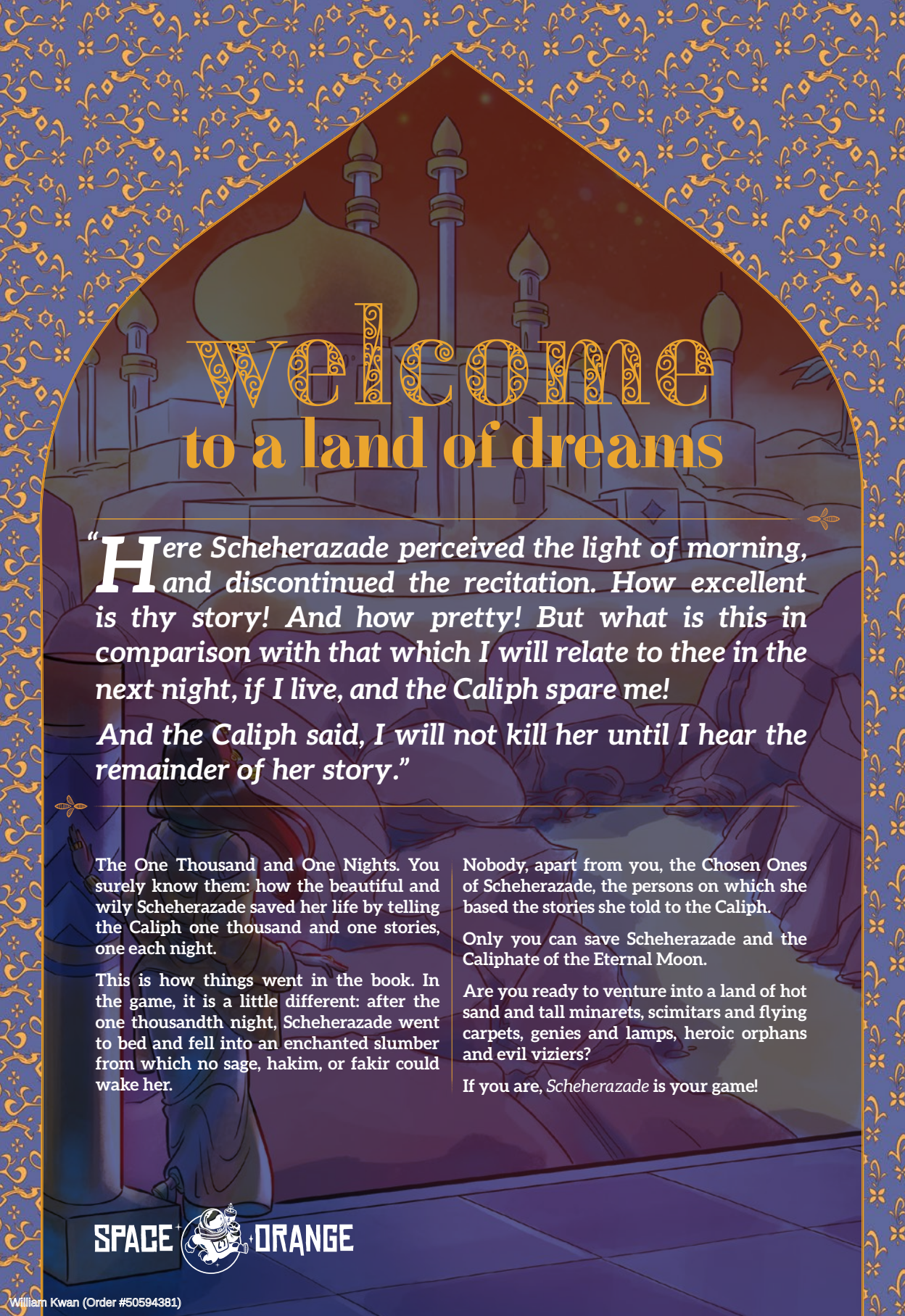
RESOURCES

EXPERIENCE

William Keyan Gomez Arroyo



William Kwan (Order #5053454)



Welcome to a land of dreams

"Here Scheherazade perceived the light of morning, and discontinued the recitation. How excellent is thy story! And how pretty! But what is this in comparison with that which I will relate to thee in the next night, if I live, and the Caliph spare me!

And the Caliph said, I will not kill her until I hear the remainder of her story."

The One Thousand and One Nights. You surely know them: how the beautiful and wily Scheherazade saved her life by telling the Caliph one thousand and one stories, one each night.

This is how things went in the book. In the game, it is a little different: after the one thousandth night, Scheherazade went to bed and fell into an enchanted slumber from which no sage, hakim, or fakir could wake her.

Nobody, apart from you, the Chosen Ones of Scheherazade, the persons on which she based the stories she told to the Caliph.

Only you can save Scheherazade and the Caliphate of the Eternal Moon.

Are you ready to venture into a land of hot sand and tall minarets, scimitars and flying carpets, genies and lamps, heroic orphans and evil viziers?

If you are, *Scheherazade* is your game!

SPACE ORANGE

William Kwan (Order #50594381)